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THE BASIS OF ASCENDANCY

FOREWORD

VILLARI, the critic of Italian letters, has repeated in his chapter upon Settembrini an anecdote which had much moved the older patriot.

“One summer night two goatherds who had been sentenced to the galleys were pacing a terrace in the prison yard and gazing ecstatically at the starlit sky. Said one of them to the other, ‘How I’d like to have as many sheep as there are stars up above!’ ‘Where would you pasture them?’ asked his companion. ‘In your meadow.’ . . . ‘What! in my meadow?’ . . . ‘Yes, I tell you I’d do it!’ . . . A few minutes later one of the two men fell to the ground, stabbed to death by the other.”

Villari repeats the familiar but striking story because Settembrini himself and a scholarly fellow-prisoner, after long ethical discussions upon the human significance of the incident, came, within a few days and in the course of a like dispute, almost to the very point of its reënactment. Indeed, how often in every generation do the controversies which divide foe from foe — and the sadder quarrels which divide friend from friend — arise out of the issues involved in the pasturing of imaginary flocks upon the plains of imaginary meadows!

And yet, what, in the deeper sense, are the real sheep upon the real meadow except a symbol, — like the star, — a symbol temporary in its form but representative in the human mind of an established, imperishable “interest”? And what is the meadow of the inhospitable friend but the symbol also of an “interest”? And what are all our conflicts of individual or social life but quarrels concerning the symbols of apparently conflicting interests? It does not seem to make so much difference, after all, whether the symbol itself be the flocks below or the stars on

FOREWORD

high: the inward essential quarrel springs from an attitude of mind, and involves those apparent oppositions of principle which change their symbols but which persist, through action and reaction, in all the history of our progress.

The discussion of any of the issues of social conflict — particularly the issues of race — may recall the incident of the Italian prison. Men fight and die in behalf of the symbols of conflicting interest. I fancy that from the eternal standpoint it is as unreasonable — and as reasonable — for men to quarrel about the sheep as about the stars. I say "as reasonable," because while the symbols are not important, the deeper issues which they involve may be as persistent and as fundamental as the quarrel between light and darkness in the soul.

These things we may not change. The issues between truth and error will themselves remain. We may not postpone them or disguise them. We may seek, however, to remember and to learn; to see clearly; to be just; to gain something of that sense of perspective which, not without the saving capacity of humor, divides lesser things from greater. But we will also remember that the symbols of the quarrel have often a significance as deep as the peace of states; that their issues, according to the quality of our stewardship, may descend in fortune or misfortune to millions other than ourselves; that the real conflict is always somewhat deeper than a quarrel lodged between the meadow and the stars.

And yet that impulse of murder which made fraternity impossible came not from this deeper conflict, nor from the meadow, nor from the stars, but out of moods which we *may* change; out of that diseased frenzy for possession through which a man — turning upon even the partner of his imprisonment — has been known to destroy his one friend and his only wealth.

Through the self-conquests of a finer intelligence and a juster temper he might have achieved the winning of both. Such possessions are destroyed within us by something lower than our principles.

THE BASIS OF ASCENDANCY

A DISCUSSION OF CERTAIN PRINCIPLES
OF PUBLIC POLICY INVOLVED IN
THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE
SOUTHERN STATES

BY

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¹¹
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TO MY MOTHER
JANIE GARDNER MURPHY

PREFACE

IN the preface to the volume entitled "The Present South,"¹ I expressed the hope that that series of chapters might shortly be followed by another. The fulfilment of the expectation has been delayed. Much of the volume has been written, yet the conditions of persistent ill-health and the pressure of other responsibilities have compelled the postponement of its publication.

In the meanwhile, and just as its completion came clearly into view, it became evident to me that this second volume of essays should be preceded by a more explicit statement of those principles of fundamental policy which both the collections of essays were intended to illustrate. From this decision the present volume has resulted; and the second series of papers is, therefore, again withheld. They are practically ready, however, for the press; and their publication, under the title of "Issues, Southern and National," will ultimately follow. In this future volume (as also in "The Present South," already published), there will be found, moreover, a discussion of many specific subjects — such as agricultural education, the negro school, the lynching problem, the problem of child

¹ "Problems of the Present South," The Macmillan Co., 1904; Longmans, Green, & Co.; New York and London, 1909.

labor, compulsory education, suffrage restriction, the new federalism, etc. — which do not directly come within the scope of the present publication, but which bear more or less directly upon its thesis.

For the present volume is an attempt to deal with an issue more general in its nature, but none the less critical in its bearing upon the development of our Southern States. Back of all the issues of the moment, as they may express themselves in this or that phase of definite legislation or of accepted custom, there lies the question of fundamental attitude. Where two social or racial groups — a stronger and a weaker — find themselves in inevitable contact upon the same soil, what elementary principles shall ultimately determine the policies of the State? And by the State I here mean no merely artificial political entity, but the local organ and expression of our social responsibility. Shall the principles of its policy, in relation to its weaker racial or social groups, be repressive or constructive?

That, I cannot but think, is the real question. It is because this question has seemed to me so fundamental and so definitive in its nature, that many of the technical issues of ethnology, and many of our controversial discussions as to the ultimate significance of "race," have seemed to me comparatively irrelevant. The man who is apparently inclined to overestimate the significance of "race," and the man who, upon the other hand, is inclined to ignore the importance of racial distinctions, are both — as American citizens of this immediate hour — confronted by a definite situation. How shall we deal with this situation? To prove that all men, ages ago, were much alike and

that we may not declare dogmatically against the ultimate parity of racial groups, does not abolish the obvious consideration that we have now to deal with the stubborn realities of a world in which races are not upon a par — either in their social or industrial efficiency — and in which the respective families of men are alike no longer. The State cannot base a present policy upon prehistoric conditions. To do so would but entail, aside from its injury to the stronger race and to the social whole, an even deeper injury to the weak. In its disappointment of expectations such a policy could only increase the burden of their despair and set to work within the stronger group the inevitable reactions of a still greater social and political distrust.

While, therefore, I cannot concur in what have seemed to me to be the assumptions involved in the argument of Professor Royce, I am also unable, upon the other hand, to concur in the assumptions which seem to me to underlie the recent volume from Mr. Stone.¹

If the former seems to underestimate the meaning of race, the latter seems to me to give to the fact of

¹ See the article "Race Questions and Prejudices," by Josiah Royce, LL.D., Professor of Philosophy in Harvard University, in the *International Journal of Ethics*, April, 1906; reprinted in October, 1908, in his "Race Questions and Other American Problems," The Macmillan Company; and also the volume by Mr. Alfred Holt Stone and Mr. Walter F. Willcox, entitled "The American Race Problem," Doubleday, Page & Co., 1908. It is impossible within the limitations of a brief preface to enter fully upon the discussion of either book. Each will find fuller consideration in the volume on "Issues, Southern and National"; and I shall there attempt, in an essay entitled "Are there Lessons in Jamaica?" to deal especially with Professor Royce's suggestions as to that Island.

race a disproportionate significance. That the negro group is relatively weaker than the white group within which it has become locally included is obvious indeed; that the negroes are, upon the whole, less efficient than the stronger race is also obvious. It is true, moreover, that the facts as to their present moral and economic situation are, in many respects, an occasion of grave and increasing apprehension. But it is also well, I think, to remember that there are other facts of brighter omen; and that many of the facts which are not so bright — which constitute indeed some of the most formidable occasions of discouragement — lie partially at least within the category of “removable obstacles.” Nothing is more characteristic of the better tendencies of contemporary opinion than the growing appreciation of the economic bearing of ethical, political, and social forces.¹ While it is true that a full and accurate record of the facts will contribute to the making of our policies, it is also true that our policies constantly contribute to the making of the facts, — the

¹ See particularly “The Limits of Political Economy,” by Fred-eric Harrison, in his “National and Social Problems,” p. 263. I am inclined to think, however, that Mr. Harrison’s criticisms of the average economist are less applicable to-day than in the year 1865, when they were first printed. Marshall himself, the leading economist of the conservative school, has said, “Ethical forces are among those of which the economist has to take account. Attempts have been made to construct an abstract science with regard to the actions of an “economic man,” who is under no ethical influences and who pursues pecuniary gain warily and energetically, but mechanically and selfishly. But they have not been successful. . . . His normal motives have always been tacitly assumed to include the family affections. . . . But if they include these, why should they not include all other altruistic motives the action of which is so far uniform in any class at any time and place, that it can be reduced to a

spontaneity, industry and resiliency of labor being intimately responsive to the moral appreciation and the legal and economic position accorded it in the general social policy of the state. That the negro's powers are not the powers of the white man, and that his present capacities are at many points not equal to the economic competition presented by the stronger race, is due in part to the fact that the negro is a negro: but how far is it also due to the fact that that sense of "security as to his property and his person," which is the best school of the economic virtues, has not always been adequately permitted him, and that that "hope," without which, as Marshall declares, "there is no enterprise," is as yet but partially enjoyed? The fact that the negro is a negro, the State may not alter; but the fact that the negro — quite as much at the North as at the South — has not been adequately accorded the economic support of the profounder social forces of security, opportunity, and hope, the State may largely alter if it will. Will it do so?

general rule? There seems to be no reason. . . . This principle is applied not only to the ethical quality of the motives by which a man may be influenced in choosing his ends, but also to the sagacity, the energy, and the enterprise with which he pursues those ends." And as to the influences which awaken and strengthen the forces of sagacity, energy, and enterprise, Marshall says, "Freedom and hope increase not only man's willingness but also his power for work; physiologists tell us that a given exertion consumes less of the store of nervous energy if done under the stimulus of pleasure than of pain; and without hope there is no enterprise. . . . Security of person and property are two conditions of this hopefulness and freedom." See "The Principles of Economics," by Alfred Marshall, Professor of Political Economy in the University of Cambridge, England, p. vi of the Preface, and p. 250, Vol. I. See also the quotation from Mill, on p. 146 of the present volume.

To present, at least in some degree, a basis for an affirmative answer to that question, is the purpose of this volume. For it is a question which directly concerns not merely the fate of the negro and the health of the national life, but the fortunes of the stronger race in our Southern States. I have written primarily, therefore, as a Southerner to the South. And yet while I cannot but think that the South has much to correct and to overcome in her readjustment to the tragic fate in which she has become involved, I trust that she will never so far modify her feeling in reference to the validity of social differentiations as to minimize the significance of race. No sound assumption of democracy demands it. Every true interest of humanity forbids it. When the Professor of Philosophy at Harvard University speaks, as Southern men have often spoken, of the morbid and excuseless exaggerations of racial feeling — so frequently exhibited in the relations of racial groups, — one who has long lived within a scene of racial contrasts can understand the value of his message; but when he seems to question the serious basis of that feeling, declares that “our so-called race problems are merely the problems caused by our antipathies,” places the race antipathies of social groups among “the childish phenomena of our lives,”¹ and assures us that they belong “on a level with a dread of snakes and mice” (“phenomena that we share with the cats and with the dogs”), the man who is familiar, at first hand, with the complexities of race adjustment under the conditions of a democracy must register

¹ See page 48 of Professor Royce’s “Race Questions,” etc., to which I have already referred on page xiii.

his protest. A sane and righteous and wholesome adjustment of race relations is not advanced by a spurious "catholicity of race" which would ignore the very existence of the factors which give to our problem its reality. An amity of inter-racial appreciation which would not merely value and applaud (as we must) the finer phases of the individuality of each, but which would seem to find in that individuality itself something to belittle or deny, is not, in its principle, either a counsel of praise or a grace of healing. It is but a subtle way of saying to the weaker group that it has nothing individual, nothing peculiar to itself, which it must sacredly conserve in the interest of all; it is also but a subtle way of making it impossible to say to the stronger group that its individuality is, in all its finer and happier achievement, a thing too sacred, too indispensable to the service of the world, to be delivered upon the one hand to the dragging pressure of lower groups, or to be surrendered, upon the other hand, to those self-corrupting antipathies to which it is forever tempted.

There is, it seems to me, a racial cosmopolitanism which is quite as morbid as the provincialism of the mob, and quite as dangerous (were it ever given its full institutional expression) to the peace of states and the deeper interests of civilization. Men must conduct the business of government not alone upon the basis of their unity, but also upon the basis of their diversities. We are confronted by vast accumulated and entrenched realities of emotion and conviction, of social instinct and historic tradition, of collective necessity and of palpable experience, which cannot be

composed by placing the phenomena of race antipathy "on a level with a dread of snakes and mice." That may be the "psychology" of it, but that is not the daily truth of it — nor the broader wisdom of it, as we take up the problems of public policy, and attempt the perplexing task of democratic administration. And that that is not even the psychology of it, I am inclined to believe, as I weigh the passages in which another has defined "the original and elementary subjective fact" in society itself. These offer, at least in some measure, not a justification of race antipathies, but an explanation of that instinctive consciousness of race and of that persistent individuality of racial character of which our antipathies are the aberrations. We read: —

"In the subjective interpretation [of society] it will be necessary, as we already know, to start from that new datum which has been sought for hitherto without success, but which can now no longer remain unperceived in the narrowing range of inquiry. . . .

"The original and elementary subjective fact in society is *the consciousness of kind*. By this term I mean a state of consciousness in which any being, whether low or high in the scale of life, recognizes another conscious being as of like kind with itself. Such a consciousness . . . acts on conduct in many ways, and all the conduct that we can properly call social is determined by it. . . .

"In its widest extension the consciousness of kind marks off the animate from the inanimate. Within the wide class of the animate it next marks off species and races. Within racial lines the consciousness of kind underlies the more definite ethnical and political groupings, it is the basis of class distinctions, of innumerable forms of alliance, of rules

of intercourse, and of peculiarities of policy. Our conduct toward those whom we feel to be most like ourselves is instinctively and rationally different from our conduct toward others, whom we believe to be less like ourselves.

"Again, it is the consciousness of kind, and nothing else, which distinguishes social conduct, as such, from purely economic, purely political, or purely religious conduct; for it is precisely the consciousness of kind that, in actual life, continually interferes with the theoretically perfect operation of the economic, the political, or the religious motive. . . .


"In a word, it is about the consciousness of kind, as a determining principle, that all other motives organize themselves in the evolution of social choice, social volition, or social policy. . . .

"The consciousness of kind being the psychological basis of social phenomena, it follows that the supreme object of social value is the kind itself, or the type of conscious life that is characteristic of the society. Each nation supremely values its own characteristic qualities, and it is this social self-valuation that we call national [or racial] prejudice. It is the essence of the Briton's love of things British, of the American's pride in things American. . . .

"Next to the type in social value is the social cohesion. The existence of a society depends on its unity, and when its integrity is threatened, the community shows itself ready to make any sacrifice that may be necessary to save union. The most splendid examples of social feeling have been the patriotic enthusiasms that have been aroused by the threatened disruption of nations [and races]. As a bond of cohesion loyalty is valued in every community in which social feeling is normally developed . . ." etc.¹

¹ "The Principles of Sociology," by Franklin Henry Giddings, Professor of Sociology in Columbia University in the city of New York; pp. 17, 18 and pp. 147, 148; third edition, New York and

That the consciousness of kind has often expressed itself in irrational and exaggerated forms the author of the paragraphs which I have quoted would probably be the last to deny. The instinct of race has been a destructive as well as an integrating influence. But the correction of the false by-products of great elemental social forces does not come through the belittling of those forces, but through their wiser discipline and their true direction.



The consciousness of race we cannot deny, but we can educate it into finer forms. By increasing both the intelligence of its self-knowledge and the security of its basis we may enlarge the scope of its sympathies as well as the faculties of its self-control. For we learn to sympathize with the race-struggle of other social groups, not through a denial of its reality or by depreciating its significance, but through the knowledge in our own life of what a race-standpoint and a race-struggle are, and through the revealing power of that intenser social individuality within ourselves which alone makes really possible an appreciation of the individuality of others. This truer ground of inter-racial appreciation may not be at once attained. There will be failures of administration and failures of reticence. But those who have followed Professor Royce in his criticisms of these two phases of our delayed attainment will not altogether forget that the task of administration, as it has devolved upon the South, is not

London, 1900. The words in brackets are inserted by myself merely to indicate what seems to me to be the further bearing of the passage on the phenomena of race. With both the Greek and the Jew the patriotism of race preceded, and outlived, the existence of the state. — E. G. M.

yet wholly free of the embarrassments bequeathed from an unfortunate period of maladministration which preceded; and that even the task of reticence—in view of the by no means inflexible reticence of New England upon the negro question—will not improbably present its difficulties. And yet, while an acute self-consciousness, racial as well as sectional, has naturally followed from the fact that the South has been placed ~~so largely on~~ the defensive, and while the tendency of defensive activities is to develop the negative rather than the constructive capacities of social groups, the South is beginning to stir with a freer and stronger spirit. But it will not soon be possible to ignore the fact that hers are all the problems of other sections—and another problem added; all the tasks, religious, educational, economic, of other democratic peoples—and another task beside; a problem and a task which, like a new term in a formula of chemical reactions, will give new phases and an altered outline to many of the familiar adjustments of more homogeneous groups.

Does any one suppose that the perplexities which thus move us are chosen as a pastime? There is much that is suggestive in the new racial cosmopolitanism which is so rightly (if somewhat raspily) insistent that we shall appreciate all the difficulties of the “backward races of mankind”; but I trust that it is not too much to hope that this cosmopolitanism will become ultimately so comprehensive that from its broad and genuine solicitude the strain and perplexities of the white race will not be necessarily excluded.

For the South is just now immediately concerned with a task of statesmanship, rather than with a

psychology of racial origins upon the one hand, or with the subtle melancholy of economics upon the other. Not that either is to be despised. Every truth of a just psychology, every fact and inference of a sound body of economic science, will directly bear upon the policies of the state. And yet I can conceive of no truth from either source that can alter the essential form of the practical question with which we have to do. It is the same for pessimist or optimist. Starting with the fact that the negro is a negro and that his capacities, upon the average, are not the capacities of the white man, — what shall be the policy of the state toward such capacities as he has? Shall it be a policy of negation or of development?

It is in the conviction that within the answer to this question there lie, for our Southern States, the ultimate issues of social health and power that this volume has been written. And the principles of public policy which may well determine the course of our development possess a significance not wholly restricted within the boundaries of our local task.

E. G. M.

MONTGOMERY, ALABAMA,
March 23, 1909.

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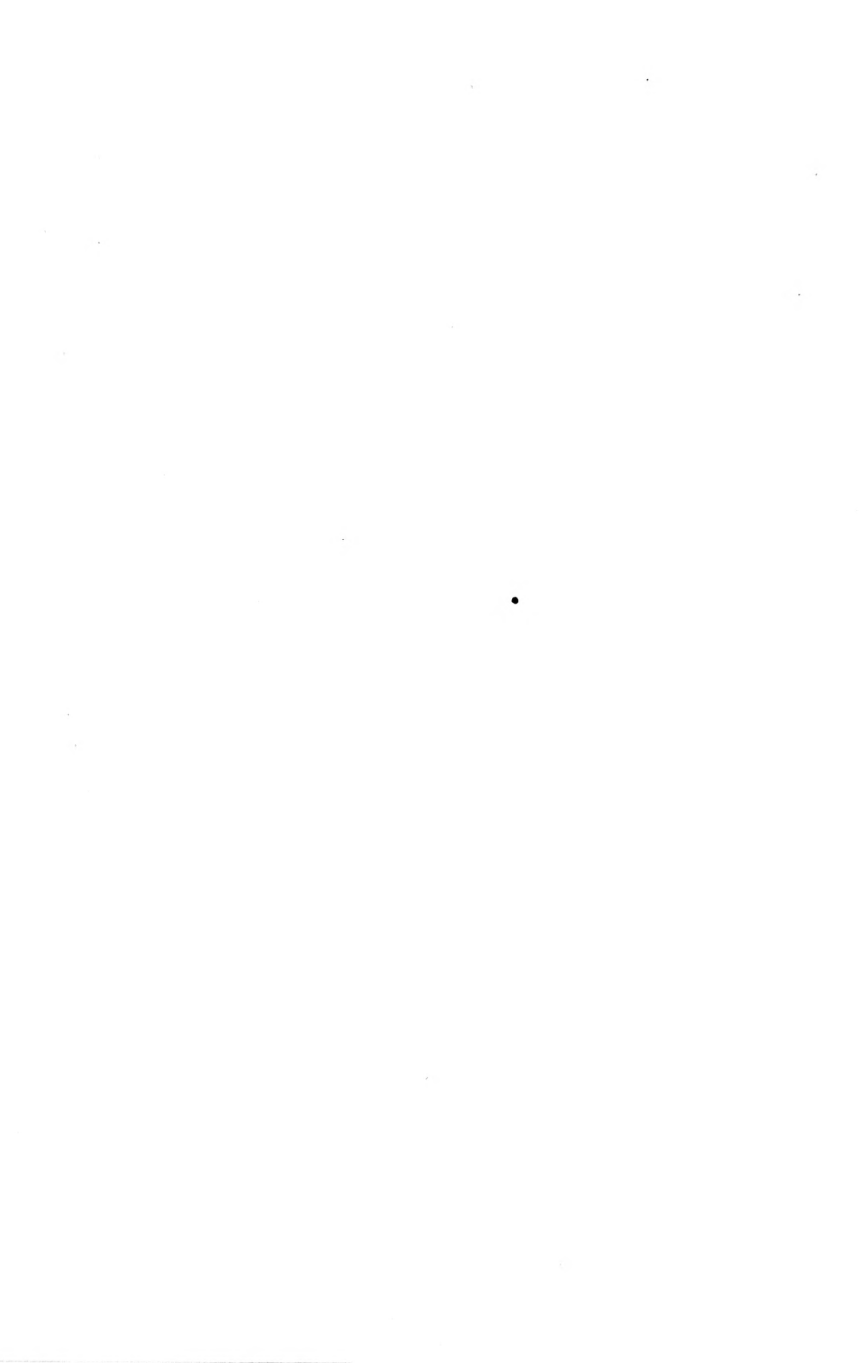
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THE INDIVISIBLE INHERITANCE





THE BASIS OF ASCENDANCY

CHAPTER I

THE INDIVISIBLE INHERITANCE

It is so frequently assumed that the most significant factor in the history of our negro population is the factor of its exploitation that a word of contradiction is never quite out of place. Within its actual environment, whether North or South, this population has suffered much, but it has received more. It has become involved so inextricably in the fate of a far more efficient social group that the conditions of progress within this stronger group have become the conditions which must surround and advance the life and fortunes of the weaker.

Some of the conditions of progress for the stronger (such physical conditions as the influence of the colder climate of our continent, such social tendencies as the rapid development of our cities) may operate to the disadvantage of the weaker; but it is true, upon the whole, that the negro and his children have become with us — and whether we will or no — the joint beneficiaries of our civil, educational, and political heritage. It is the truth; and it is well for us at the South to face it, just as it is also well for our friends at the North, in fact for all who appreciate the institutional solidarity of the Republic, to face it with us. For while its history may be sectional, its consequences — the subtle

invasions of its good or its evil — will necessarily be general.

The negro has been subjected to intentional and, therefore, but partial discriminations, — for it is in vain that men plan to withhold advantages which no man can escape. The suffrage of the blacks has indeed been sharply limited by statute, but the very act of limitation has involved a narrowing of the basis of the whole electorate. Drastic declarations as to the divisions of privilege on racial lines were everywhere published. Indiscriminate immunities were proclaimed for white men. Ruthless discriminations were pronounced against black men. The battle raged. The clouds of conflict have rolled away. Within less than ten years thousands of the worthier black men, under our amended constitutions, have been admitted to the ballot; and in Alabama alone, in the first presidential election after the readjustment of the suffrage, more than half of our adult *white* men did not qualify and vote. Despite all the frank assertions of discrimination on the part of the South, despite all the imputations of discrimination from the side of the North, the thing which the Southern majority declared should happen and which the Northern majority denounced as having happened has not happened at all. Many negroes have been admitted. Many white men have been excluded.

Some measure of discrimination has been effected. Everywhere there arise discriminations, in one form or another, against the weak; and the race possessing the most weakness has naturally suffered the greater discriminations. But beneath and within these arti-

ficial discriminations from without, there has worked — by subtle, inexorable processes of self-administration — the levelling and equalizing force of individual capacity. For, after all, the only permanent exclusion from political influence in a democracy is self-exclusion, — the self-exclusion of ignorance, indifference, incapacity. Where these existed, the law could not be framed so liberally as to enfranchise;¹ where these have not existed, — where knowledge, interest, capacity, have even measurably prevailed, — the law could not be framed so illiberally as to disfranchise. I speak not narrowly or literally, within the perspective of a day, but broadly and fundamentally — within the perspective of a generation.

This is that deeper fact of things upon which the crude negro governments of the Reconstruction period went to pieces; this is also the fact in reference to which every exaggerated righting of that reconstruction, every undemocratic element in our more recent readjustments of the suffrage, will find correction. There is no point within the organic structure of American society at which, or about which, an artificial or arbitrary political discrimination can intrench itself. Our common institutions are a common freehold.

Let no man assert, moreover, that the possibilities of discrimination have been defeated by the letter of the Fifteenth Amendment. As I have observed its political influence, it has operated chiefly as an irri-

¹ See p. 129 of this volume, and, especially, the author's paper, "Shall the Fourteenth Amendment be Enforced?" in the *North American Review*, January, 1905; to be reprinted in "Issues, Southern and National."

tation. It has provoked the distinctions it was ostensibly established to defeat. As a formal enactment it has accomplished little, except in so far as the truth upon which we have just dwelt has begun to work, with the power of its resistless equalizations, beneath the arbitrary adjustments of the State. And this deep, prevailing principle of things — this remorseless equity of nature, existing long before the enactment of the Amendment, first operated, after its enactment, to annul the intentions which many of its advocates desired it to impose.

Its letter was first established to exclude and confound the political capacity of white men, to strengthen those discriminations which had already placed the governments of the South in the hands of our negro ignorance, venality, and incapacity, and to perpetuate (under the guise of the federal protection of the weak) the political proscription of the strong.¹ It declared

¹ There were many generous spirits at the North who gave their support to such policies as Thaddeus Stevens had represented, not because they were moved by a partisan or vindictive animus, but because they were persuaded that the negro would find in the ballot his only effective protection. I am reluctantly forced to the conclusion, however, that this was the motive of the minority (made up chiefly of sincere philanthropists, and men of letters), and that the darker spirit of Mr. Stevens seems to have been representative of the majority of his party. Such an impression is not due so much to Southern testimony as to the records of the Congressional debates, to such Northern witnesses as Mr. Blaine, the late Carl Schurz (see his speech in the U.S. Senate, January, 1872, quoted on p. 178 of this volume), and Mr. James Ford Rhodes, whose sixth and seventh volumes in his "History of the United States" are of especial value: not that I would make either Mr. Schurz or Mr. Rhodes the responsible author of my impressions, any more than I should always literally concur in their interpretation of the sources of the period.

that no State should discriminate against any class of its citizens upon the ground of race; yet the Reconstruction measures (by sweeping disabilities already laid on the "disloyal," *i.e.* on all those who had participated in "the late rebellion") had so operated toward the creation of a class citizenship that the practical effect of the Amendment was but further to confirm the discriminations which its letter now condemned.¹ Its immediate issue, taken in conjunction with the legislation previously imposed, was a discrimination against the white man in the interest of the black. For, within a scene of political impartiality, the result of a decree of non-discrimination is justice; but a decree of non-discrimination imposed within a scene of social distortion and of pre-established partiality is something less than justice and something more than restitution.

Yet the presumptive impartiality of the State, the equal and even status of every class before the law, became, as is the tendency in democracies, a force corrective of the forms which had obscured it. The outward terms of the Reconstruction adjustment were annulled by the natural working of the truth which they were first framed to express and then administered to defeat. This truth lies, as we have seen, in the very equity of nature, is of a piece with the intimate structure of society itself, is of the soul of constitutions, because it

¹ The exclusion of practically the whole resident white population as "the disloyal" could not but operate (automatically) as an arbitrary exclusion of race (the white race), and was, in principle, the precedent for the "grandfather clause" of a later period, — a clause which under a similar arbitrary device excluded so large a majority of the blacks.

is of the essence of social order, there being no legislative or arbitrary way to make those strong who are not strong or to make those weak who are not weak. Those with the capacity for government will govern.

It is this truth which overthrew the Republican discriminations against the political privileges of white men; it is this truth — not any attempted legislative expression of it — which has slowly modified the Democratic discriminations against the political privileges of the negro. In the long run our political proscriptions in America are always defeated by forces deeper than those of external inhibition, by the realities of inherent right and power as these have obtained between man and man, — by that ignorance and helplessness in one because of which he cannot rule (no matter by what names we may exalt him or how low the obeisance we may make to him), and by that interest and aptitude in another because of which he cannot be enslaved. It is a result which we may detest or may desire; it is not a result which we may permanently change, nor is it a result which a member of any stronger race should care for one moment to have otherwise. By reason of the inherent, unyielding processes which ceaselessly adjust and readjust the fortunes and relations of men it is inevitable in a democracy that political prerogatives should slowly but surely fall from the hands of those who are too ignorant or too indifferent to wield them; that discriminations based upon arbitrary distinctions should be written in water; that the only way in which a particular class may hope to hold the prerogatives of a superior race — under the educational or industrial or political conditions of our Ameri-

can society — is to be superior, and that however or wherever we may hope to base the enduring ascendancy of one race as against another, we shall in vain seek such a basis in any artificial readjustment of our institutions. The law that “His rain falleth on the just and on the unjust” is not more inexorable than the silent, implicit ordinance of our democracy that, though there may be races many and classes many, yet that class *as* class shall never rule. At the throne of power our differentiations are abdicated; it is humanity which governs.


The suffrage, however, presents naturally the point at which any weaker race will enter least fully into that solidarity of our institutions of which we have been thinking. Among all our common benefits the benefits of prerogative will come last. How much the negro shares, how much he has inherited in the abundance of our social fortunes, will appear still further, as we note his more general advantages in contrast with those of any like number of the race elsewhere. He enjoys his religious and civil freedom, but these were won for him and not by him. In his past stands no long history of spiritual adventure, of social struggle and civic education, — no memories of a Martel at Tours, of a Luther at Worms, of a Thomas More at London. Magna Charta and the Bill of Rights are the historic symbols of a collective struggle, of a social and political achievement, to which he has not contributed, but within which he has been adopted. The very law which he now invokes has come up out of the suffering and patience of another social group. It is the flowering of the consciousness of another race,

is in its genius and expression the white man's law — made out of the texture of the white man's experience, and shot through and through with the instinctive assumptions of a psychology to which the negro as a negro is largely alien. This is one reason why he makes no intimate response to it, why it is hard for the negro as a negro to understand it and obey it.

And yet this law is his. It is about him from his infancy. It is his heritage. It is not nicely adjusted to his racial needs, to his native tendencies, but it is the only law there is; and, exacting as it may appear, it takes up his nature within the forms of its familiar practice and shapes him in conformity with its human type. That it does not destroy him wholly, that he, in spite of much mental and moral catastrophe, is slowly responding to its expectations, is evidence of that adaptability of nature which is one of his strongest characteristics. As time passes, the blessings — to him — of the fate in which he is involved are likely to become more evident. Even to-day it is obvious that this strange contact presents to his race the supreme opportunity in its history. The white man's law stands about it — not perfectly — but more perfectly than the law which surrounds any weaker race at any other point within our world. The stronger race may want to kill the representative of this weaker group, but it cannot do so without destroying the law which is its own protection; the white man may want to rob him, but he cannot legally rob him without violence to the safeguards of his own gain; the white man may want to withhold from him the securities of trial by jury or the benefits of legal process in the courts, but

the white man cannot do so without unsettling to his own bitter disadvantage all the fundamental securities of property and life. Social disorder will always have its apologists, but they become a feeblener and feeblener company as men clearly realize that in their own interest they cannot adequately preserve their institutions through the processes of flouting them. The law which enfolds the weak with the strong becomes a social necessity, rather than a loose and voluntary compact. Its Saxon directness, its Latin, imperious universality, are elements in the progress of our administrative efficiency which the stronger race, however great the burden, must increasingly attain, must attain in the interest of its own welfare. It has discovered — it has always known at its heart of hearts — that a civilization not responsive to its own political and social genius it itself cannot long endure.

And thus stands our situation throughout the range of our social achievement in America. At every point the negro inherits, receives. If public schools are founded, he must share in them, whether we will or no. He can be denied only by processes of deception and self-deception which cost the stronger race a price financially more laborious and intellectually more stupefying than the burden of his schools; for there is neither economy of purse nor largeness and happiness of mind in the presence and contact of the semi-savage masses of our new generations of illiterate blacks. It is idle to talk of the fineness of the old-time negro who was illiterate. He, and the paternalistic conditions which created him, are gone forever. We must train our present negroes through the churches



and the schools because we have nothing else through which to train them. And yet, were there no schools at all, they could not wholly be cut off from their part in the inheritance of an educated world. Just as the negro shares in the uses of every paved street, of every well-constructed country road, of every railway, of every public utility of every sort, — facilities chiefly demanded and supported by the commerce and intercourse of the stronger race, — so he enters also, however humbly or indirectly, into the heritage of every intellectual and moral asset of the country. If there be freedom of the press; if there be a press fit or unfit to be free; if there be a vital and spiritual religion; if there be books, artists, poets; if there be an historic and responsive language; if there be stable banks, equitable markets, courts accessible and for the most part just; physicians, hospitals, and — by no means least — the kindly interest of the wisest and kindest of a more highly developed population, — these are the negro's. In so far as they are ours, they are his; in so far as they are not his, they tend, in subtle, inexorable fashions, not to be our own. In the fundamental sense we can no more make a bi-racial division of our civilization than we can make a bi-racial division of the sunshine, the rain, the returning seasons. It is the fate of the land. It is the tragedy of those long ago, North and South, who tried at its birth to divide their labors without dividing their liberties. We but confront the fiat of reversal. Labor and freedom are indivisible.

THE PROTEST OF OUR SELF-
PROTECTION



CHAPTER II

THE PROTEST OF OUR SELF-PROTECTION

AGAINST such a reading of our conditions there has been insistent protest. This protest has sprung, however, not so much from a reasoned and articulate dissent as from a sense of popular revulsion. The protest has been instinctive, an emotional reaction — and therefore an implicit confession of the unalterable fact to which it stands related. We have recoiled, not because the fact can be denied but because it must be admitted. It is but further recognition of that solidarity of our institutions, of that indivisibility of our heritage, which is the real basis of the racial repugnancies arising within the legislative indirections of the State and in the subtler and more powerful discriminations of social custom. If the fact were not true to us and were not accepted by us, it could create neither revulsions nor reservations.

We sometimes imagine that “the cause of the negro” is being thrust upon us by “the North,” or — in a controversial sense — by the negro himself, or by this or that political party; and such an interpretation of our contemporary experience is occasionally true. But we know, or ought to know, that that which really thrusts the negro (or any other weaker factor in our American environment) up into the consciousness of the majority is something deeper and more inexorable than any external power, — it is the hidden and intimate hand

of our society itself; that silent, unyielding force of civil equalization to which we have committed, and have everywhere desired to commit, the keeping of our ultimate ideals and of our fundamental institutions.

And yet it is inevitable that we should have protested against what many have assumed to be its immediate implications. Indeed, the truth itself appalled us; and as we contemplated the spectacle of our social faiths involved in the test and strain, not of the comparatively homogeneous people which created them, but of the contrasted populations to which they are committed, our repugnances became deeper than our enthusiasms. We moved impulsively to the rescue both of our institutions and of ourselves.

There is little time, at the first, to enter into an ultimate philosophy. There are no precedents to guide. Whatever may be said as to the intentions of those who stood for a mathematical and immediate realization of all the literal implications of "equality" (as the doctrine fell from the lips of Sumner), whatever in New England may have been devoutly hoped as to the political elevation of the negro *per saltum* from nonentity to mastery, the South's instant and supreme concern — as she confronts the policies of Reconstruction — is not with the political education of the negro (or of anybody else), but with the preservation of those intelligible and orderly conditions of our experience which we call civilization. The first duty of the hour is the preservation, not of this or that institutional organization of society, not even of democracy, but of society itself. Doubtless it is in a sense true that "the way to teach a man to use the ballot is to put the ballot

in his hands," but as applied to the situation presented to the South at the close of our Civil War, such a declaration is valid only upon the theory that the first obligation of a democratic society is not the preservation of society or of democracy, but the abandonment of both in the interest of an educational experiment. If it be indeed the supreme business of the State to educate the incompetent at the expense of the competent, and to sacrifice the political efficiency of the State itself in the interest of the participation of the inefficient, then it becomes somewhat difficult to perceive just what — even for themselves — the inefficient have secured. For the State itself, as an instrument of social order, becomes impossible. That to which the novitiates have been introduced is not a realization of freedom, for it is the abrogation of security; nor is it a participation in democracy, for there is no government of the people where government is itself discredited, — "the people" not being in themselves a government any more than a mob is a court or a river is a water-power. Restraint, direction, discipline, order, are of the essence of utilization. There is no tyranny so pitiless in its exploitation of the ignorant as that government — of whatever time or place — through which mere ignorance attempts to know and to decide, and through which the weak assume to rule. White supremacy at this period in the development of the South is a necessity to the preservation of those conditions upon which the progress of the negro is itself dependent. Democracy, as the ignorant masses of our colored population rise to seize it, goes to pieces in their hands.

Nor is that in which they are educated by their suffrage the suffrage itself; it becomes rather that hard lesson in the social and political reactions of modern states by which the first prerogative to be formally bestowed is so often the last to be actually enjoyed; for it is as true in politics as in economics that no man can really keep that which he cannot use. In vain are military forces brought to the support of these negro masses "to insure a republican form of government," for it cannot be too often pointed out that such a policy — involving in the effort to protect one class, the abandonment of republican conditions for all classes — represents the final catastrophe of the "educational" experiment. In the interest of the weak, in the very interest of all that they may hope to inherit of democratic institutions, in the interest of their practice in free government, government itself must be freely permitted to find its local basis, a local leverage for administrative efficiency must be regained, the interests and the competencies of society must be intrusted with its primary responsibilities and must be enlisted in the support of its processes and its forms. Not until the stronger and more practised manhood of the local scene (whatever its imperfections) was permitted to assume its normal prerogatives, could the manhood of the negro begin to have its education and its opportunity. For ultimately, and in such a case, there can be no education in society except society; no practice in government except through government itself.

There are perhaps those who will retort that under such a contention human society, in the beginning, could never have been undertaken: To which I

would reply that this is not the beginning. This — whatever its grave defects — is not the era of political or institutional origins. There is a residuum of accomplished achievement, social and governmental; nor may we abandon this achievement in the interest of those who have not achieved. Renan's observation ¹ that "the loftiness of a civilization is usually in inverse ratio to the number of those who share in it — and that the crowd pouring into cultivated society almost always depresses its level" is but a partial truth, and would involve, in its implications, the rejection of democracy: the end of society is not the culture of the few, the end of culture is the enlightenment and happiness of society. Upon the other hand, when society allows the inundation of its culture, when it permits the hard-won gains of the past, together with the very instruments and organs of social accumulation, to be submerged by the morbid beneficence of its hospitality to the weak, the weak are themselves betrayed, for they cannot enter upon the enjoyment of that which they have been permitted to exploit. The multitudes of the novitiate should have their social and political education; and it is in a measure true that their best instruction in the suffrage is in its exercise. This exercise of the suffrage must be so guarded, however, through gradual processes of participation, and so bestowed under ascending approximations of influence, that the pupils in the school of society may be effectually prevented from destroying the school. The introduction of the politically in-

¹ Ernest Renan, "Religious History and Criticism," translation by O. B. Frothingham, New York, 1864, p. 325, on "Channing and the Unitarian Movement in the United States."

capable will indeed develop their political capacity, if this introduction be effected under wise restraints and through well-adjusted stages. So conducted, the gains which result are a real possession both to the novitiate and to the State. The ultimate end should be an increasing political assimilation; not the progressive narrowing but the progressive broadening of the basis of popular control. But when the introduction of the incapacity of the weak is so precipitate and so overwhelming as to submerge the capacity of the strong, then all those rights of the weak which their new prerogatives were intended to protect are involved and discredited in the common ruin.

Human society as it emerges above the scenes of civil catastrophe must, in behalf of its very existence, put the interests of restraint, of discipline, of immediate practicability, before the subtler interests of individual recognition. Such days are the days of rough work. Men cannot wait upon delicate and difficult distinctions as between this personality and that. Moreover, if incapacity appears in the guise of conspicuous human aggregates, in multitudes marked off by traditional or observable characteristics, its groupings are hurriedly marked and its proscriptions are ruthlessly imposed. There was doubtless in all this some fear and hatred of the negro, but there was chiefly — as the very necessities of the case will indicate — a swift, intense, intolerant repudiation of disorder, a demand for order, an imperious reaffirmation of government, an assumption and exercise of fundamental prerogatives, — a reorganization of society within which the institutional experience of the strong

is put at the service of the common progress. There were wrought within this process of readjustment certain social aversions and certain racial antipathies, but these aversions were conservative and these antipathies were defensive.

THE IMPULSE OF RACE AGGRESSION

CHAPTER III

THE IMPULSE OF RACE AGGRESSION

BUT the times and the conditions change. The aversions which were so largely conservative have a tendency to become destructive, and the antipathies which were defensive become aggressive. The stronger race begins to pay the tragic penalty of arbitrary processes. The rough and ready means of social rehabilitation — as they cease to be the methods of emergency — begin to lose that dignity which the stress of accident accorded them. The single instance of fraud, the one deed of violence, which were justified in a struggle almost military in its intensity, began to assume a lower quality when the end in view was no longer the saving of the State but the quite ordinary turn of partisan advantage. Practices of evasion have a tendency to pass back, by subtle but inevitable processes of reaction, into the will and habit of the authors, and the bias of indirection slowly affects the whole body of the electorate. Processes invented and tolerated for the rescue of society against black men began to imperil, by their employment among white men, the health and freedom of the society which had been rescued. Demand therefore arose for formal restrictions of the suffrage, restrictions which should save society from the curse of informal fraud.

The change was urged, moreover, not primarily as a restriction upon the negro, but as a restriction of the

factional advantages of certain white men, — men, who, living in the Black Belt and using the actual negro population as an asset, claimed their representation in the party counsels upon a basis proportionate to the total theoretic strength of their respective counties. I say “theoretic strength,” for the negroes were no longer voting. It was easier, however, to make a campaign for reforms against negroes who were not voting at all than against white men who might be voting both for themselves and for the negro also!

Few political movements in history have been so little understood as this campaign at the South for the formal disfranchisement of the blacks. Conceived, first, as a method for freeing the stronger race from the burdens of personal indirection, and, secondly, as a method for the equalization of factional power within the party, it bore in its origin only the slightest animus against either the negro or his fortunes.

But the habits of deception had not been the only habits developed in the school of our political necessities. The sources of class suspicion, of intense and cumulative prejudice, lay deep, upon both sides, within the natures of these respective races, — races so different in type and so unfortunate in every phase of their mutual contact. That slavery qualified them for the understanding of their new situation, for participation in an intelligent and fruitful knowledge of one another, is true only in a momentary sense. For its own type of peace, for its own characteristic amenities — mastery upon the one side and affectionate dependence upon the other — slavery was an adequate school. But as a school for freedom, for the mutual under-

standing and the common forbearances of independent individuals or groups, it was necessarily inadequate. For the peace of democracy, slavery is not a school; and as time wore on, each group came inevitably to stand more and more apart, to perceive its own interests, to attain its own self-consciousness, and to define the fortunes of the state in the terms of its own exclusive welfare.

It was upon these central founts of racial self-consciousness, deep-stored through centuries of divergent interest and conflicting aspirations, troubled through the long controversy preceding our Civil War, by that war itself, and by the bitter injuries which followed it, that there descended the rod of our recent suffrage agitations. However meek the motive of that rod, the answering flood has not yet ceased to flow. The social aversions which were, as I have said, conservative, have become increasingly destructive; and the antipathies which had been defensive, become, under the exigencies of factional strife and of popular clamor, increasingly aggressive. The new mood makes few professions of conservatism. It does not claim to be necessary to the state's existence. It does not presume to say that society itself is in abeyance and must be restored, or that the state is endangered by the domination of the ignorant and must be saved. These new antipathies are not defensive, but assertive and combative; this popular temper is not in its animus protective, protective of civilization in need or of government in distress, but frankly and ruthlessly destructive. Here, in the last analysis, is an attack upon the weak rather than an attempted rescue of the strong.

The temper of such a movement has found a broad and responsive basis in the masses of the unprivileged white population of the past.¹ The effort to exclude the negro from the exercise of the suffrage has excluded many of these also, but many, as we have already seen, have been included. They are by no means the socially and industrially "destitute," — "the poor white trash" of our legendary fiction, — but the great masses of a sturdy rural population; unprivileged in the sense that they did not fully share in the slave-owners' aristocracy of wealth, but full of that eager wit, that homely force, and that industrial resiliency which have wrought the South's superb reaction from the catastrophe of arms. Their larger access to political power has made their influence numerically predominant. The very struggles concerning the suffrage have given them a political self-consciousness which perhaps is more assertive than that of any other social group in our American life; and they have discovered — what every self-conscious class is quick to perceive — that the ballot is an instrument of aggression as well as a weapon of defence; a spear as well as a shield.²

Having secured through its exercise the political elimination of the larger fraction of the weaker race, they have proceeded to an attack upon practically every privilege it possesses. And yet we must use the word "they" with careful reservations. A population so virile, even when drawn together by the arti-

¹ See Chapter I of the author's "The Present South."

² I first find the familiar metaphor in a quotation from Sterne, in "Democracy and Liberty," W. E. H. Lecky, London and New York, Longmans, Green & Co., 1897, p. 101.

ficial solidarity imposed by the presence of an alien and weaker group, is by no means of one mind. The whole electorate is, moreover, powerfully influenced by a minority — made up of the remnant of the older aristocracy and by many of the representatives of our professional and commercial classes, — a minority powerful to restrain if not always powerful to accomplish. Thus the movement of race aggression of which I have just spoken has from point to point been modified. It represents, as yet, a characteristic tendency of feeling, a natural and conspicuous activity of opinion, but not at any point a consciously accepted program. Its victories exist, its further victories are inevitable, but it has suffered also its defeats. The question as to how largely and how literally it shall be permitted to establish itself in the practice and legislation of our Southern States is still an open one; it is a question which the future must determine. It is a movement which has been checked at many points. Many of its apparent victories have been neutralized by later action. Many of its insistent proposals are so impracticable as to be impossible of adoption; many, by significant majorities of the white voters of the State, have been deliberately rejected.

And yet this movement is among us. I have already dwelt upon the significant intolerance of its logic ¹ as it has viewed the interests of our negro masses. Its more radical spokesmen have proceeded by easy stages from an indiscriminating attack upon the negro's ballot to a

¹ See the paper on "Southern Leadership" in the *Sewanee Review*, January, 1907; to be reprinted in the volume entitled "Issues, Southern and National."

like attack upon his schools, his labor, his life; — from the contention that no negro shall vote, to the contentions that no negro shall learn, that no negro shall labor, and (by implication) that no negro shall live. Its spirit is that of an all-absorbing autocracy of race, an animus of aggrandizement which makes, in the imagination of the white man, an absolute identification of the stronger race with the very being of the state, which would eject with a pathetic but intelligible intolerance every heterogeneous element from the body social, which would include within its expulsive policies every weaker group (for the very forces at the South which would destroy the political parity of the negro are in opposition also to the immigration of the Oriental peoples), and would thus create a homogeneous society upon the basis of homogeneity of race. Weaker groups, if they remain at all, remain to serve rather than to share. It is the old effort to begin where the land began, but to ignore its history and to forget its sins; to erase its tragedies by legislative resolution; to attain the ends of our great adventure by force of doctrine rather than through the stern realities of experience; to repeal, indeed, the very force and arbitrament of Nature.

For what are the means by which such a conception is to be established? Again we must return to the considerations which in the opening pages of this volume I have attempted to express. There are some things which are not found among the established privileges of men. No man may choose his parents, nor may he choose his native soil. He cannot remake his country's past, nor alter the assumptions or the principles which

have become his civil heritage. More important still, he may not put these principles into operation upon Monday, repeal them or modify them upon Tuesday, and reimpose them upon Wednesday. Nor may he at the same time apply them as obligations and withdraw them as privileges; nor may he ever so far forget the divine inconveniences of a Republic, as to be able securely to assume that his indirections of administration will automatically so operate as to bestow only their immunities upon one class and only their penalties upon another.

The fundamental political constitution of a people cannot be perpetually readjusted between meals by devices of application. It cannot be so altered, from instance to instance, as that it may "hit the negro" in one case and in the next may let the white man off. The thing cannot be done. "Accidents" will surely happen. The man who declares boldly that we will have one law for the white man and another law for the negro would like us to believe that the only opposition to his program lies in the negro, or in the "interference of the North," or in the Fifteenth Amendment to the Federal Constitution. But the real obstacle is somewhere else. It is in the very nature of things; it is in the bone and being of his country; and — little as he may at first believe it — it is in himself.

No American, North or South, white or black or yellow, wants that sort of country. We know — if we know anything at all — that our own experience is, somehow, the final authority against arbitrary methods. The processes by which we may have taken an oblique advantage of the black man, whether in the exercise of

the suffrage, or in the support of the public schools, or in the practice of the courts (even though the extent of the discrimination may have been exaggerated by a hostile and external criticism), are processes by which white men have quickly learned to take oblique advantage of one another. And we also know that what we do is an offence against ourselves, that we do not like it, and that — from man to man — we say so. For we know that the process by which men have sometimes cheated the negro out of his legitimate privileges, as these privileges are written in our settled precedents and our own established laws, is a process by which they have cheated themselves, not infrequently, out of their consciences and their peace.

Moreover, the very institutions which our discriminations were at first invented to protect are soon, by the increasing bias of these very discriminations, emasculated of their proper power. If it is hard to convict a white man of the murder of a negro, it soon becomes equally hard to convict him of the murder of a white man. Courts which find themselves unable to punish the crimes of a stronger class against a weaker class discover that the legal precedents and the social habit which have stood between the strong and the weak are likely to stand at the last between man and man through all the classes of the strong. And the failure to punish means the inability to protect. In any society, human life in general tends to become as cheap as the life of its humblest representative. Just as in our economic experience there is a tendency of the collective wage to respond more quickly to the reward of the poorest than to the profit of the richest, so under the automatic

adjustments of the forces of social order the standard of the common safety has a tendency to respond to the type of protection accorded to the weak rather than to the type of protection provided for the strong. We are all, upon the average, no safer — so far as our legal status is concerned — than the lowliest of our citizens. The defect of law or custom which gives immunity to his murderer may give immunity to the murderer of the great. Moreover, the twist of precedent, the bias of opinion which may seem to unsettle only the property or liberty of the helpless, will at length illustrate the helplessness of the courts which permit the traditions of discrimination; for a court which cannot do justice except in relation to a man's race will soon find justice impossible except in relation to a man's wealth, or his party, or his family. Such an institution becomes an organ of private convenience (or inconvenience) rather than an organ of social right, and in those darker hours of some more general crisis which involve the fundamental securities of the common peace, men begin to understand — in their despair — that the equities which have been day by day abolished in petty cases involving a weaker social group, cannot, upon the instant, be reassembled and reënthroned for the protection of society as a whole.

Just as a man's character in his Judgment Day will respond in conformity with the deeds of his spirit and the pieties of his private closet, so even the higher courts of a people will tend, automatically, to become expressive of their fundamental character. The ultimate security of those common rights which we intrust to the keeping of an incorruptible but representative judiciary

are less and less dependent for their sway and efficacy upon single individuals, such as a Marshall, a Chase, a Taney, and are increasingly dependent upon the equity of the social temper of society as a whole. The courts, especially under democratic institutions, are at last but subordinate and expressive organs of our civilization; they are its strongest and finest protection, — but they cannot protect it against itself.

Thus the law which does not protect the weak, will not — and in the end cannot — protect the strong. That which our oblique processes and our temperamental discriminations — whether in the letter of our statutes, the administration of the police, the opinions of the bench, or the verdicts of the jury — must destroy (if the zealots of race antipathy shall have their way), is not the negro, nor the white man only, but society itself, — society as a sufficient instrument of equitable and profitable relations between man and man. When, accordingly, we cheat the weak out of his legitimate protections, we not only despoil ourselves of our consciences and our peace, but we cheat our generation and its children out of the heritage of our institutions. It is idle to say that the man who thus protests against the madness of some of the forms of our race antagonism is “silly about the negro”; he is silly — if such concern be silliness — about his State and its welfare. He is struggling to save the ballot from degradation, the courts from paralysis, the schools from the touch of an ignorant and benumbing controversy, our industries from the destitution of crude warfare or depleting irritations, the law from injustices which will blight the wholesome progress of every class among us, our society

itself from the reproach that its rights are partial and that its efficiencies, so far as they may be founded on its evasions, are based upon the sands. If to fight against these things is to fight for the negro, then there are some of us who wish it to be known that we are fighting for the negro.



THE INADEQUACY OF REPRESSION AS
A POLICY OF ULTIMATE ADJUSTMENT

CHAPTER IV

THE INADEQUACY OF REPRESSION AS A POLICY OF ULTIMATE ADJUSTMENT

AND yet one must be blind indeed if he fail to appreciate the instinctive basis of many of our policies of repression. A strong man struggling upward under the consciousness of submergence and suffocation strikes right and left with little thought of either principle or policy. Upon every hand, precipitated into the issues of every industrial or social movement are the black masses of a less developed population. No one can fully understand such a situation except the man who has been reared right in it; and no one can fully understand it, can quite perceive its deeper significance, its profounder contrasts with other situations, its larger consequences to our country as a whole, except the man who for some definite period of his life has been compelled to live outside of it. When the processes of every local institution — the legislatures, the courts, the schools, — are clogged with abnormal masses of the ignorant and the weak, and when these are the masses not simply of a homogeneous group, but of an unassimilable and recently subject race, the strain upon administrative capacity and upon the administrative conscience becomes inconceivably acute; the sense of social suffocation becomes almost unendurable. Strongly as it may protest, therefore, against his faults of temper or against the dulness of his insight, the modern world has, I think,

far greater personal sympathy — upon the various issues presented by the negro — with the intolerant extremist of the South than with the intolerant extremist of New England. It has been inclined to look upon the struggle of the South, thus far, as a struggle for breath and for time, an effort as of one who, beating back the flood and shaking from his faculties the blindness and the roar of ocean, has as yet been hardly able to view the land and to take his course.

For even the more violent of the aggressive antipathies upon which I have already dwelt have had a partially defensive meaning. This meaning has been sometimes perverted, just as normal social instincts are often and everywhere perverted, by an ignorant and selfish leadership; but it has had legitimately a double basis: a basis, partly traditional, in the struggles of our earlier history, in the habits of self-protection imposed by the policies of Reconstruction; and a basis in our social and racial fears, — our fears, not of any definite political domination, but of a general encroachment upon the white man's "blood."

By this the South has meant something more formidable, however, than the physical mixtures of the white and negro strains. This it has indeed abhorred, despite the fact that its deeper instinct and its deliberate ideal have been again and again betrayed (as is the fate of social ideals elsewhere) by the base and the irresponsible of the stronger race. But this mixture of the races has represented something more than a physical catastrophe; to the thought of the South it has meant, through the encroachments of one racial group upon another, an encroachment of lower standards, of cruder

instincts, of weaker will, — not a reciprocal jointure through which the culture of one human family strikes hands with the culture of another; through which the American, whatever his station, strikes hands with the culture of England or Germany or France; — but an alliance without an ally; a jointure in which the social achievement of one side stands comparatively at zero. The American may thus unite with the humblest Slav, but this Slav has his contemporary heritage in the culture of the Slavonic peoples, its symbols in Prague, in Posen, in Moscow, in St. Petersburg. However illiterate or brutal the Slav may be, his human possibilities have had their established demonstration. The heights of historic, palpable achievement have been forever won for himself and for his children. His own problem therefore is chiefly individual. In answer to a collective conquest which may inspire him and to which he may respond, he has but to claim for himself an established heritage, already devised and bequeathed, in the estate of the modern world. The Japanese, too, have a culture (and by the word “culture” I here chiefly mean a demonstrated social efficiency) of rare power and charm; and even the Chinese — poor and ignorant as are those who chiefly visit us — have such a culture also, crowned by a large and powerful aristocracy of knowledge, wealth, and pride.

But whereas the stronger race in the United States may enter upon its accepted relationships with such human groups, touching through their individuals, however lowly, the potential units of a demonstrated social achievement, it merges with the negro only upon

the terms of tragic loss. The individual indeed may get the strain of genius from negro blood. The future may hold — and I think does hold — a noble and happier promise for large numbers of the negro race. I speak, however, not of the individual of to-day nor of the many in the future, but of the collective and established standards of social reciprocity. There are more than one hundred and fifty millions of negroes in the world, but there may be found among the ambassadors at Washington no representative of any creditable, efficient, self-determining negro group among contemporary peoples. The fact at the background of every Russian, however ignorant, is contemporary Russia, — with its vast brutalities, but with its history, its art, its now conquering martyrdoms; the fact at the background of every Pole, however desolate, is contemporary Poland and its undismembered aspiration — a nationality even without a land;¹ the fact at the background of every German, however stolid, is contemporary Germany, — of every Frenchman, however volatile, is contemporary France: but the fact at the background of every negro, however wise, or well educated, or brave, or good, is contemporary Africa. At no point in the history of states or in the development of human families does a demonstration of his social capacity or of his collective achievement in art or letters or government look out from the familiar possibilities of his genius. In the land where he has accomplished most, his social achievement has been either denied upon the one hand or bestowed upon the

¹ Compare an interesting passage in Lord Acton's "The History of Freedom," etc., Macmillan & Co., London, 1907, pp. 205, 206.

other; it has hardly been self-attained; and such blood alliance as the stronger race has made with him it has made not through its love and at its altars, but through its weaknesses, and beyond the gateways of its self-regard. The child is the child of the mother's house, is born into the negro's life. There are millions of mulattoes, but there is no mulatto home.¹

Let no one imagine that the hand which writes these lines has moved under any but the tenderest impulse for the tragic fate of the American of negro lineage, or

¹ That mulattoes do not intermarry — or that they do not have orderly and happy homes — is not in the least suggested. There is, rather, a strong tendency for color to seek color, and for the mulatto stock thus to find normal and honorable perpetuation. The phrase of the text is intended to point out, however, that while, as to his blood, the individual may be divided between the races, the home — as a social institution — is not divided, but falls within the life of the one race or the other. While to many it may seem inaccurate to call the mulatto a negro, it is equally inaccurate to call him strictly white. To create an intermediate classification as in Jamaica, and to divide the population into "white," "negro," and "colored," is but to increase the confusions and complexities of the problem; — for there thus arise, in fact, three groups instead of two, — the irritation between the colored and negro classes being often quite as great as that between the negro and the white. With this general subject I am to deal more fully in "Issues, Southern and National." In the present discussion, and in relation to the immediate questions of our public policy, I deal with the mulatto factor simply as a factor of the negro group, the mulatto being assigned to that group by the public opinion of both sections and both races, and by the general sentiment of the mulatto element itself. This sentiment is partially due to the pressure of the feeling of the stronger race; but it is due even more largely to the fact that the child is the child of the mother's home — forming its earliest social and racial affiliations, its first and strongest bonds of interest and participation, with the race into the life of which its consciousness awakes. It instinctively claims the home of its birth as its social basis. See, also, on the probable persistence of racial divisions, the paper by Kelly Miller, in the *Atlantic Monthly*, to which reference is made on p. 68.

that in the writer's judgment, any human factor in our modern society is more justly entitled to the fate of a truer and more generous comprehension. If I dwell upon it briefly, I do so not because there is so little to be said, but because there is so much that words can never say. And yet when we clearly face the immediate questions presented by the conservative antipathies of the South, the kindlier restrictions which — without needless rancor or captious intolerance — have kept the barriers against the social encroachment of this weaker group, and have so drawn the circle of inviolate seclusion about its women that no child of the weaker race has ever been born into any home of the stronger, I think we are bound to answer substantially as the South has answered.

Would it have been well, upon the other hand, for the South to have adopted the counsel of the extremists of New England? Would it have been well — not merely in the interest of the white man but of humanity in its broader sense — for the merging of these peoples to have been deliberately contemplated in the policy of the State? ¹ The number of those who think that the South should have answered in the affirmative has from year to year, I think, grown smaller.

Does it then follow, it may be asked, that people will intermarry merely because marriage is legally permitted, or that those who study in the same schools or who eat at the same table will necessarily unite? Not at all; yet in the adjustment of the relations of two great populations and in first establishing the normal

¹ The reader is also referred to "The Present South," Chap. II, pp. 34, 35, 36, and to "The Romanes Lecture," of 1902, by James Bryce, LL.D., quoted on p. 330 of that volume.

association of two huge and variant masses — including the weak, the ignorant, the vicious of both races — the policies of the State and the customs of society have necessarily their educative function. Put upon the defensive not merely by the pressure of the negro population but by the North's aggressive alliance with the negro's less wholesome aspirations, the stronger race at the South was bound to intrench its protections with all the emphasis, intensity, and finality which it could command in the laws, the customs, and in even the more trivial symbols of relationship as these have obtained between group and group. Such divisions, viewed in their larger meaning, were factors in the discipline of multitudes, forces of social education. They marked off the metes and bounds of orderly but distinct development. They were rough rules in the schooling of readjustment, yet they were a help to peace and a necessity of survival. Confusion, bewilderment, were everywhere. It was not a time for parleying. It was a time for the directive force of instant, imperious demarcations. Such a policy may have involved, it did partially involve, the denial of compassion to a few; but it was the enactment of mercy for the many. If certain of its details were debatable, its alternative was unthinkable.

But the details of any policy of repression will, with lapse of time, be increasingly open to debate. For the policy of the South which began in a legitimate protest against the repression of the white man, which in both its defensive and its aggressive antipathies represented an instinct of self-protection, has sometimes tended to

represent, at least in the purpose of certain of its spokesmen, a mere policy of repression toward the negro. That repression, so long as it seemed to be based upon our own necessities of self-protection, was inevitable. But its basis, with the passing of those necessities, is slowly shifting. No modern state, much less a modern democracy, can accept a policy of deliberate repression as defining its permanent and essential relation toward any racial or social group. The details of any such proposal will necessarily be subjected, therefore, to close and rigorous analysis — in the interest of the group in question, in the rightful interest of all the members of the stronger race, and, above all, in the interest of the nation as a whole. To this point I have again and again recurred. As the South now emerges from her period of acute catastrophe, from the abnormal conditions of industrial and political revolution, she will necessarily define the status of every faction or element of her people in the terms of our fundamental heritage. She will do so because she will realize that whenever the stronger race attempts to base its relations with the weaker race upon any arbitrary readjustment of our institutions, the wrong committed is a wrong against the strong as well as against the weak, — a compromise of their common inheritance for which the oblique advantages of any favored class can offer no adequate compensation.

But our new necessities — what I may call our permanent emergencies — are not less difficult than the old: they are, perhaps, even greater; for they call for larger patience, closer and clearer thinking, and a stouter will. It is always easier to hold down a man

whom you fear than to achieve the mental acumen and the moral steadiness to think out the problem as to how, after your release of him, you are to manage to get on with him. And yet the release of him is inevitable. Our new necessities are more imperious than his own. An attitude of *unreasoning* and permanent repression is to us more intolerable than to the negro. We are too busy, too much interested in other things, too eager for larger enterprises and freer minds, to be consumingly engaged in the business of keeping some one down. The thing, moreover, is impossible. Not only is the negro growing stronger, but the whole world will daily add to his strength in direct proportion to the repression which he suffers. The universe — like the peacemaker in the streets — cannot hear our quarrel till the strong man let the weak man go. The South will never have its hearing till the fury goes out of certain eyes and the noise of certain of our public men is stilled. As the world takes the negro's part, as the negro gains in strength, as the South wearies of its more morbid preoccupations, as the cruder policies of repression begin to tremble in the rigid framework of their terms, the representatives of our reactionary leadership — in the honest but pitiful hysteria of their fears — would seek the remedy in *more* repression, and would attempt by the shrieking rancor of their appeals to galvanize into further life the old terrors, and to banish into still fainter distances the better angels of our age. For a brief period they may prevail. But the South, as she grows more confidently into the new powers of her social self-possession, as new supremacies invite her and a more varied

ascendancy awaits her, will do, I think, that which a strong people at length always succeeds in doing. In redefining her relations to the negro she will, in the first place, put her observation and her judgment in control of her prepossessions — will attempt to view the facts and the forces of our life precisely as they are. And in the second place she will, in learning from those facts and those forces, resolve to fight with them and not against them; will make no war upon the fundamental realities of the situation; will co-operate with them, will take them up into the deliberate structure of her policies, knowing that in the adjustments of social groups only the policies which are so based — only those which find their justifications deep within the truth of things — which are in alliance with sound reason, with the equities of nature, with that collective instinct of social right which is at length appearing among mankind, will or can endure.

THE DOUBLE BASIS OF OUR RACE
SECURITY

CHAPTER V

THE DOUBLE BASIS OF OUR RACE SECURITY

SUCH, at any rate, I believe to be the only ultimate ground for either the policy or the philosophy of our self-defence. Much of the instinctive protest against the advance of the negro race has been due to the fear that its development would contribute to its encroachment upon the white man's life. The leaning toward arbitrary processes has largely sprung from no direct hatred of the negro, but from the vague suspicion that unless burdened with peculiar disabilities his progress might oppose the progress of the stronger race. Many have thus antagonized his education merely because they have seen in it a peril to ourselves. They have not cared, primarily, to keep any man in ignorance; they have not personally desired the hopelessness of any class; but they have distrusted the bestowal of any power upon this weaker group which might strengthen its capacity for access into the life and destiny of the stronger.

Such an attitude may seem to betray a lack of confidence upon the part of the white race in its power to meet, upon its own resources and at any odds, the encroachment of the black. Its alarm may seem at first to indicate a defect of essential pride. And yet the explanation is not far to seek. The imagined peril of the situation is not the mere peril of the morbid interests of the negro, but the peril which has seemed

to lie in the two factors of that double alliance which has thus far operated to support them.

One is the factor presented by the vicious elements of the stronger group, by its own forces of irresponsibility and vice. Every social aggregate of whatever sort carries within its own number the elements of its possible self-betrayal. Much of the South's talk against the negro has therefore been the South talking to itself; has been its rebuke, by implication, of those corrupting elements within the limits of its own life which answer to no high policy of social self-respect, to no fine purpose of racial conservation, but which under the lowest impulses would degrade the present and betray the future. And the other alliance, the other support of the suspected peril of the negro, has been from without, from that indiscriminating sentiment in his behalf which has so often seemed to govern the expressions of our Northern States, States possessing for practically two generations the prestige of political and party power. That the North as a whole would now consciously and deliberately attack the racial security of the South, I do not believe; such a suspicion is not usually shared by those who know the North at first hand. The fact is, however, that the formative majority of neither section can personally know the masses of the other, that the greater number of those living in either section must take their impressions, necessarily, at second hand, and too often from an unrepresentative press and from the unrepresentative exponents of sectional or political controversy. And in view of what through such means the Southern majority is permitted to know of the North, it is not strange that the North, viewed in

its political solidarity as a party force, should be the subject of decreasing, but still evident distrust.

Yet as the common and familiar attitude of the North becomes less controversial, and as the white South gains stronger hold upon the weak and apostate elements within its limits, the possibilities of encroachment from the side of the weaker race are seen to be less formidable than has been supposed. It becomes evident, indeed, that the sound development of the negro — so far from increasing the perils of that encroachment — is one of the policies upon which the South must ultimately depend for the intelligent and permanent differentiation of these racial groups.

Certainly there is no adequate or permanent defence in a program of indiscriminate repression. Such a course can only operate to destroy both the instincts and the interests around which the solidarity and the efficiency of racial groups are organized. Indeed, as I have elsewhere said: —

“The perils involved in the progress of the negro are as nothing in comparison with the perils invited by his failure. And yet if any race is to live, it must have something to live for. It will hardly cling with pride to its race integrity if its race world is a world wholly synonymous with deprivation, and if the world of the white man is the only generous and honorable world of which it knows. It will hardly hold with tenacity to its racial standpoint, it will hardly give any deep spiritual or conscious allegiance to its racial future, if its race life is to be forever burdened with contempt, and denied the larger possibilities of thought and effort. The true hope, therefore, of race integrity for the negro

lies in establishing for him the possibilities of a broader social differentiation within his own racial and social life.

"A race which must ever be tempted to go outside of itself for any share in the largeness and the freedom of experience will never be securely anchored in its racial self-respect, can never achieve any legitimate racial standpoint, and must be perpetually tempted — as its members rise — to desert its own distinctive life and its own distinctive service to the world. There is no hope for a race which begins by despising itself. The winning of generic confidence, of a legitimate racial pride, will come with the larger creation — for the capable — of opportunity within the race. The clue to racial integrity for the negro is thus to be found, not in race suppression, but in race sufficiency. For the very reason that the race, in the apartness of its social life, is to work out its destiny as the separate member of a larger group, it must be accorded its own leaders and thinkers, its own scholars, artists, prophets; and while the development of this higher life may come slowly, even blunderingly, it is distinctly to be welcomed. As the race comes to have within itself, within its own social resources, a world that is worth living for, it will gain that individual foothold among the families of men which will check the despairing passion of its self-obliteration; and instead of the temptation to abandon its place among the races of the world it will begin to claim its own name and its own life. That is the only real, the only permanent, security of race integrity for the negro. Its assumption is not degradation, but opportunity." ¹

¹ From the author's "The Present South," Chap. VIII, pp. 273, 274.

And such, in a profound and inevitable sense, is the only security for the race integrity of the white man. Two races, in ceaseless contact upon the same soil, cannot be kept asunder, upon any rational and permanent basis for their differentiation, if we seek the foundations for such a basis in the self-respect of but one of the groups involved. Such a conception of our cleavage may for a brief period find its security in the passions of war, or in the immediate traditions of a poignant social readjustment; but an emotional revulsion is not a policy. Like the moods produced by artificial stimulation, the preservation of the intensity of a social antagonism demands an increasing measure of excitation — a demand which is as futile in its permanent accomplishment as it is damaging in its social reactions. It is worse than profitless. In the slow processes of time, the powers of class animosity have always proven inadequate for the protection of the integrity of one group against the intrusion of another, unless the instincts of self-respect and of self-protection are profoundly entrenched upon both sides.

The South, as I have said, has made distinct progress in its command over the lower elements of the stronger race. And yet this stronger race unfortunately will never be an absolute moral unit. No racial group can ever wholly control its rebellious elements. It has no power to constrain its members. No matter how resolute its collective purpose or how imperious the dogmatism of its social creed, it cannot enforce this purpose or impose this creed except in so far as its varied units are responsive to its general mind. It can hold the obedient. It can do nothing with the

lawless, the vicious, the irresponsible. Any human society can control, within approximate limits, the outward customs, the accepted fashions, the laws, the institutions, the daily business, and even the average ambitions of its personal units, but it cannot abolish those forces of moral anarchy which lurk within the shadows of them, the instincts of vice, of self-contempt, of sheer animalism, or of secret and deliberate rebellion by which every civilization is every day flouted and undone. And just so long as there are all about us the great masses of a weaker race to which we are in part unwilling or in part unable to open the freest and fullest opportunities of self-equipment and self-respect (the two are fundamentally inseparable), these rebellious minorities of our stronger race will extend their fusion — the tragic fusion of white and black — without regard to the heritage they betray or to the miseries they promote.

✓ In vain will men try to increase the distance between these masses by louder outcries and ever fiercer denunciation; — such devices are but a confession of the increasing futility of the whole program of repression. They are but the remedies of emergency, the expedients of alarm. They achieve nothing. They offer no basis of relief. They afford no permanent security. They announce no theory of constructive betterment. They are but the crude panacea of an itinerant philosophy, living “from hand to mouth” on the exigencies or the repugnances of the moment, and bankrupt of any enduring social promise.

The instinctive statesmanship of our people will ere long suspect that the extremists of the “anti-negro”

school are thus shrieking so loudly chiefly because they have ceased to think. For every failure of their program of hate they have but one remedy — more hate; and for every demonstrated evil of repression they have but one corrective — more repression. Surely we may depend upon the South to see that such progress is not progress, but retrogression; and just as Burke declared that no people can be said to be governed which has perpetually to be conquered, so we may remind ourselves that a civilization which has constantly to be abandoned cannot be said to be established. We may, if we will, seek the permanent adjustment of these two races by setting up, perennially, a state of war or a state of society. But if we choose the one, let us not deceive ourselves into believing that we live in the enjoyment of the other.

A confident, constructive policy of inter-racial adjustment is peculiarly the thing of which the South has need. We are moving out of the period in which the theories created in the exigencies of war and of Reconstruction can be longer justified. To us the world looks for a program, — a program which can be defended not merely as the shrewd expedient of a peculiar crisis, but as a policy of permanent significance and of fundamental validity. And that, moreover, is, as we have seen, the deepest necessity of our self-deliverance.

The whole situation must be brought under the control of its higher rather than its lower forces. It is then and only then that the elementary principles of such a policy begin clearly to appear. The moment

we pause to heed the deeper counsels of our better moods, great formative generalizations begin to shape themselves about us, as the friendly landmarks of a freer spiritual country. And yet it is the same country. It is all the more truly ours, our sense of possession is only the more happily secure, when we begin to look squarely at the immutable phenomena in relation to which our habitations are henceforth to be reared. It soon seems to be incredible to us that any one could have ever hoped to rebuild the South as a permanent institutional exception to all that has been known and proved of human nature and of human societies. It becomes natural to seek the solid ground of common principles. It becomes strange to us that any one should ever have imagined that we could promote the self-respect of one race by weakening the self-respect of the other. We see that under a situation of hourly racial contact the symbol of race integrity is not the pillar, rising upon its one foundation, but the arch. We realize that, however unwelcome its implications, the self-respect of either race, in the case of two contiguous social groups, must have a double basis — a basis in the self-respect of each; and, so far as these two groups within the South are now concerned, we come to see — late and perhaps a little sadly — that there can be no permanent basis for even the very conception of the integrity of race which ignores the factor presented by the negro woman. It is at this point that the instincts and interests of the negro's racial life converge; for as with every race and with every social group, the negro woman, implicitly or actually, is the negro home.

It is just here, however, through the portal of this negro home, and through the frail defences of its violated self-esteem, that the stronger race descends to leave the legacy of its alien blood. It may be that the woman is at fault; it may be that she has at times preferred the child of the white man's vice to the child of the black man's love; it may be that she is as shamelessly weak as her most morbid detractor would describe her; — the fact, in whatever case, is clear — that so long as the stronger race is powerless to control its low or rebellious elements, the defences of its segregation are no stronger than the barrier of this woman's self-regard. The excluding partition between race and race is just as weak as her will, just as stable as her morality. The defences of her womanliness are the defences of our race integrity — they are but two sides of the same dividing wall.

The supreme question is not as to our aversions, but as to our policy. Shall we — however prodigious the undertaking — touch her situation with a constructive purpose? Shall we add, through the influences of a personal interest and the provisions of a sagacious State, to the forces which would hold her within the horizons of her weakness and her self-contempt, or to the forces which would contribute to character and to womanhood? Needless to say, I do not altogether share the cynical opinions expressed so frequently by the man in the street, as to the absence of standards among negro women. There is nothing more precarious, whether viewing the society about a throne or the cattle upon a thousand hills, than the fate of sweeping generalizations upon the subject of personal morals.

The primary condition of immorality among women is, apparently, not simply race or climate, but excessive idleness — and whether we observe the negro of the tropics, the Eskimo of the Arctic,¹ or the surfeited classes of Paris, London, or New York, we find many of the same defects of will, and, in greater or less degree, the same self-destructive tendencies. Climate is, however, a factor in imposing the redemptive necessities of labor; and few human beings, in the latitudes with which we are familiar, can long escape their discipline. Even under the conditions of contemporary Africa — and nothing can be more superficial than to assume that an incident of life there is the exact moral (or immoral) equivalent of the same act under our own complex conditions — the fact of chief significance is not that the standards of the negro woman are undeveloped, but that they are varied, differing from locality to locality and from group to group.² They represent, therefore, no fixed depression of moral life, no crystallization of abasement, no final arrestment of social or personal development. They represent a basis of differentiation. They exhibit those changes which, responsive to the shifting factors of their environment, are an earnest of further differences and of still more wholesome developments. A morality that can grow at all can go on growing. A life that can surpass the

¹ "The Negro Races, A Sociological Study," by Jerome Dowd, Vol. I, p. 135; The Macmillan Company, New York, 1908.

² Interesting first-hand impressions of contemporary Africa are to be found in the memorable narrative of the Alexander-Gosling Expedition ("From the Niger to the Nile"), by St. Boyd Alexander, Rifle Brigade; 1908, London, Edward Arnold; New York, Longmans, Green, & Co.

level of its immemorial past can surpass the levels of the present.

That the women of negro blood in the United States have responded to the varied fortunes of their environment in America, and that their general moral gains, in spite of the larger number of the weak, are as considerable as they are honorable, is the usual testimony of those who have had real opportunity for the accurate observation of negro life upon its higher side. The negro woman of the better class—because thrown less frequently into industrial relations with the stronger race—is less well known outside her own special environment. But the negro woman, whether of higher or humbler station, is manifestly upon a moral level with the general development of her people, and indeed—as with the women of other races—she is usually above it. However crude her standards, they are clearly in advance of those of negro men; and, upon the whole, they have moved definitely forward rather than backward.

That the moral inadequacies of the race are still so obvious, may, to a superficial view, obscure the significance of what has been accomplished; but the serious student of the development of the social ethics of weaker peoples will test their relative advance not solely by the standards of other and stronger groups but rather by their own past and in the light of their own historical and social situation. At the negro's ultimate background is not Europe nor New England nor Virginia, but Africa (if we must sometimes remember it against him, let us also ungrudgingly remember it in his behalf); and after Africa, came what?

The schooling of slavery in the United States represented an industrial discipline conducted under the most intelligent direction that has been brought to bear upon a lower social group; but it was attended, as an experiment, by tragic penalties upon both the more efficient and the less efficient race. It seems increasingly evident, however, that the negro emerged from that experience far stronger morally, intellectually, and industrially than when he entered it; and the transition to freedom meant a gain also.

But the gains of freedom will necessarily appear slowly, unevenly, laboriously. For, morally and psychologically, they have involved a change in the fundamental basis of control, a transference of the negro's character from conditions within which the standards of living were largely superimposed upon the will, to conditions within which the standards of living must be chiefly self-imposed. It is the inauguration of an era of larger self-direction. The shock of such a transition is profound. Its first effects within any given mass of human beings of whatever race will naturally be disastrous, disastrous not to all but to many.

The response upon the negro's part, his mental and moral reaction under the new conditions, is naturally all the more disappointing for the reason that the environment which enfolds him, the laws and institutions which lie, as a matrix of social character, about his free and unfolding consciousness are those of an alien and wholly different group. The free life into which he awakes is not his freedom, but another's;—freedom, as expressed and organized through the experience and the institutions of another race. Liberty is forever

being talked about as though it were a pure abstraction. As a matter of fact, it has no human meaning except under its institutional expressions. Its symbol is not that of a man in a vast waste of silence sitting naked beneath a solitary tree. Its outer symbol is a perfected society itself; it is a social achievement—not a bauble strung upon a string of beads, or a state of individual isolation. Men create it together or not at all. They cannot get it by going upon a journey; nor can they give it away. They can bestow its institutions; they can give to others the conditions in which they, as free men, have expressed it; have expressed, that is to say, their consciousness of what a free society is to *them*; they can give to others those forms of self-constraint and of self-development through which their own genius has conceived its destiny—the terms of that ultimate Self which it has toiled to be. But they can, in a fundamental sense, give freedom to no other race.

They can, however, strike down the formal inhibitions which they themselves have imposed upon an included group; they can erase the limitations or the discriminations which they have sought to fix in the terms of their institutions. They may do so in the interest of the weaker race; they may do so as a measure of rectification toward their own social organization and as a freer and fuller expression of their genius,—an act of self-conquest and self-development. That much the stronger race may do,—and, in the interest of the fulness and the significance of its own horizons, *must* do, to the last and smallest letter of its meaning. But the more intimate processes of

emancipation we cannot bestow. These, under the very necessities of the case and in the interest of the negro's own security, must be self-chosen and self-accomplished.

His failures will at first be manifest.¹ How soon or

¹ Yet the familiar assumption that, in the relations of a weaker to a stronger social group, the power of survival is necessarily dependent upon the power to compete, must be seriously modified. The greater the complexity and variety of a social or industrial situation, the larger the opportunities for adaptation and readjustment. Certain members of the weaker group may be displaced at some points, but they are often found to reappear at others. To assume that every negro barber who disappears from the industrial situation as a barber becomes, necessarily, a criminal or a derelict, is to go beyond the evidence. It is true that the competitive elimination of this or that negro from a traditional calling may mean "failure"; but it may also mean success;— for the negro in question may have been driven, as in instances which I have known, into other and better forms of work.

If the man who "disappears" as a barber reappears as a carpenter, or as a small farmer on his own land, he may figure in the census tables to prove all sorts of dismal theories; but, as a matter of fact, he has been forced into a sounder and stronger economic position. Many of the negroes are suffering displacement without gaining by the process. But it is a mistake to assume that displacement, in itself, is always an evidence of industrial defeat.

Nor is defeat necessarily an evidence of imminent destruction, individual or social. Nature is always upbuilding its successes, but it is also endlessly patient of its laggards. Society rewards its victors, but the sagacity with which it does so does not surpass the sagacity with which it is ever creating and re-creating the social wealth of the world out of the toil of the multitudes of the unconquering. It is a mistake to assume that society cannot and does not utilize its weaker industrial factors. Within its complex and varied organization are innumerable opportunities of adaptation and readjustment.

The individual in human society who cannot "compete" in one situation, learns slowly and perhaps painfully to take up his position at another. There are respects in which a grown man, through physical disability, may not be able to compete with the child. If so, he does not seek his economic foothold through his physical func-

how largely he can overcome them no man can say. One who appeals for the wisdom and validity of fundamental policies is not therefore bound to defend the crude anticipations of an easy optimism. But it may be well to remember, as to all our social policies, that

tions; he chooses the basis of his competition in conformity with powers which he has, rather than in conformity with powers he has not. This, indeed, is but a further development of the principle of the division of labor. It has never been so fully recognized or so profoundly operative as under the ramifications and complexities of modern society. The men who attempt to meet all other men on all grounds, are fewer in number than ever; — there were never very many! And while the untried and the uneducated are especially disadvantaged as to the conscious control of their adaptations to the economic organization (that is one of the disabilities which a true education should partially correct), yet even where the factor of voluntary choice is at its lowest, there is secured from the reaction of the industrial market in relation to the laborer, a more or less automatic adjustment of supply to demand, of specific work to the specific capacities of the individual. This, within its lower stages, and in relation to untrained masses, is relatively crude and ineffective; but in the mere fact that the best dirt-digger is not put into competition with the best spike-driver, but is put to digging dirt, we have at least a partial illustration of those adaptations of capacity to labor that are found in increasing variety and efficacy through all the higher ranges of industrial effort.

That the negro just now is finding many points in our industrial organization at which he cannot "compete" with the white man, is true. But individually and racially the power to survive depends less upon the capacity for competition than upon the capacity for adaptation; not so much on the power to meet competition as on the power (in no dishonorable sense) to avoid it, to fit through new ways into the new scene, to find a foothold upon the open land till more varied industrial aptitudes may have time for more adequate development, — or to find certain special functions in our organization which the negro has the capacity and may win the opportunity to discharge.

Such adaptations are sought, necessarily, by every group entering upon new industrial conditions. That there will be much loss and failure, and some pain, in the working out of the whole process of the negro's readaptation to American life is altogether probable. But

a program is not necessarily sound in proportion to its cynicism. I do not know how quickly or how generally the negro race in the United States, responding to the moral necessities of its position, will choose a life of more deliberate self-control; but no man can rise from a careful study of social and economic conditions in Africa to-day without perceiving that here in America the leaven of a higher social consciousness has begun to work, and that deep within the masses of this strangely different race — however unconsciously or imperfectly — the great decision has been made. The race may at certain points fall back below the level which it attained, artificially, in bondage. All that was artificial will naturally fail and pass. But however this may be, the distance between the average life of the race in the United States and the average life of the race in contemporary Africa is so overwhelmingly

that such contingencies and catastrophes indicate the early extinction of the race, or need be taken as abnormally discouraging, I do not believe. It is well to remind ourselves in this year of the Darwin "centenary" that "the survival of the fittest" does not necessarily involve the extinction of the relatively unfit. Otherwise, there would be few species now in existence on any soil. Of the relatively unfit, Nature is benignly indulgent, immeasurably prodigal. But for that fact many of us, whether regarded as individuals or as groups, would not be here to-day. Yet "there is room enough and to spare." We are not shut up in a little walled prison with only one foot of ground to till, and a single loaf to fight over and devour. It is a big world. And the power of food production per each individual upon our planet is yearly greater, and increases far faster than its population. The racial or social group which will squarely put itself into relation with realities, which will conserve and give *its* life and seek first its own fitness of character and its own power to produce, will one day discover that the world has more work than workers, and that the competition between jobs to secure a man is to be much fiercer in it henceforth than the competition between men to find a job.

evident that the progress of these people during their three hundred years upon our soil becomes one of the most astonishing achievements in the history of the Republic. The standard of comparison for the American negro should be the African negro, not the American white man. There are many who read the current records of the "dark continent" with no thought except to trace the lines of weakness, in the terms of identity, from that land to this; it is also open to us to trace them in the terms of contrast. It is a contrast full of vivid interest. Instead of depreciating its significance, no Southern man — remembering that the period of greatest advance was within the period of slavery, and that the South, within the period of emancipation, has been the local environment of the race — can well fail to record it as among the occasions of his pride. He will not forget it, though he still find upon every hand many of the signs of moral catastrophe and social helplessness.

A race which fails is not bankrupt if it be also a race which succeeds. It is idle for us to speculate as to this or that contingency which did not occur, or as to this or that contingency which cannot arise: we are face to face upon the same soil with eight millions of negroes.

All that can be done to decrease the margin of their failures and to increase the margin of their successes we will do in their interest and in our own — if their failures are indeed a menace to them, to us, and to our institutions. We cannot choose for them, but we can offer them something better than despair to choose; we cannot build their righteousness, but we can do

much to increase its inspirations; we cannot achieve for them the self-restraints, the peace, the wholesome securities of a racial or personal self-respect, but we can refrain from making it impossible: indeed, we may look abroad to find it, may watch with an affectionate solicitude for its delayed appearing, may do all that others can to give it solidity and truth, may rejoice in the slow rise of its dim proportions above the ooze and drift of long and unstable savagery, knowing that the rough stone of this foundation — waiting within the shadow of our common humiliations — is the other half of the double basis of our own integrity of race, the missing support of the uncompleted arch.

Let no one press the illustration or its phrases to literal and strained conclusions. The support is not wholly missing.¹ It in a measure now exists. Nor will it ever be wholly found; for its existence will be always incomplete, just as on the side of the stronger race, also, there will be the story of recurrent failure. But the great social differentiations of history, the cumulative divisions and demarcations of racial life, rise —

¹ One of the ablest and most representative of negro thinkers, while protesting against such an interpretation of the denial of "social equality" as would involve the surrender of civil and political rights, has said, "The charge that the educated negro is in quest of social affiliation with the whites is absurdly untrue. Household intercourse and domestic familiarity are essentially questions of personal privilege. The negro is building up his own society upon character, culture, and the nice amenities of life, and can find ample social satisfactions within the limits of his own race." — "Race Adjustment," by Kelly Miller, Professor of Mathematics in Howard University, Washington, D.C., p. 116; The Neale Publishing Co., New York, 1908. Booker T. Washington's essential sympathy with this position is generally known. See also Professor Miller's article, "The Ultimate Race Problem," the *Atlantic Monthly*, April, 1908.

as will rise the free integrities of these groups here — in spite of incidental pauses and occasional catastrophe. Their tragic or ignoble fusions will slowly cease. The individuality of each will come to clearer and larger power. Such at least will be the tendency of every guarantee accorded to the negro's elementary liberties, of every protection thrown about his property, of every legitimate satisfaction opened to his awakening manhood, of every wholesome opportunity through which he can found and equip and enrich the sufficiency of his own life; of every security that can be accorded to the character of the negro woman and the stability of the negro home. This way lies the citadel of the negro's personal and racial self-respect, of his generic pride, of his social individuality. And this citadel — because the greater millions of a stronger group cannot control their own rebellious elements — is a forgotten fortress of our own stability of race.

NEGRO RACE INTEGRITY: THE
SCHOOL OF SELF-DISCOVERY

CHAPTER VI

NEGRO RACE INTEGRITY: THE SCHOOL OF SELF- DISCOVERY

I

“BUT,” it will be asked, “is not opportunity the gate of culture? Will not security and culture increase the powers and attractions of the negro race? Will not these powers and attractions develop within that race a greater longing for assimilation with the stronger; and will not such advantages so operate, in their direct influence upon the stronger race, as to reduce its disinclination for union with the weaker? Will not the increasing development of the weaker race create the social leverage of a powerful, cultivated class, and invite the very argument for a defensible amalgamation with the negro which we found to be possible in reference to other national and racial groups?”

Such contentions have been too widely prevalent to make it either possible or desirable to deny their apparent force. They have formed the essential ground, consciously or unconsciously, of some of the coöperation accorded to the negro at the North, and of much of the antagonism which has opposed the negro at the South. Within the race itself such considerations have had their advocates. Its familiar masses are as yet unsettled as to any clear perception of their racial destiny; the majority of their leaders — as I shall

indicate more fully in a later paragraph — are turning, rather, to a policy of self-respecting segregation ; but here and there is to be found a negro writer (usually more than four-fifths white) who distinctly proclaims a policy of progress as the basis of a policy of ultimate amalgamation. It is significant, however, that this conception of the negro's future assumes a larger place in the fears of certain elements of the white population at the South, and in the hopes of a small white minority at the North, than in the thought and aspiration of the dominant majority of our intelligent negroes. They themselves, as we shall see, are entertaining a somewhat different theory. They are less and less inclined to sink their destiny in that of another race.

For the broad outstanding fact is meeting us on every hand — the fact that the fusion of black with white is occurring at the lower rather than at the higher levels. No theoretic apprehension as to the tendencies of negro progress should be permitted to obscure the significance of this concrete situation, inasmuch as the chief factor in every problem is the thing as it is. Nor is this a mere temporary or incidental phase of our American situation. Races, nationalities, social groups of practically every description betray the tendencies of coalescence not at the top but at the bottom. An "aristocracy" is always an integrating force. The development of a higher class creates a centre of social organization, a basis of differentiation, a rallying point of common hopes. It arrests disintegration and establishes a basis of racial confidence and of enduring racial life.

It is altogether probable that as the years pass into the decades, and the decades into generations, there will

continue to be rare instances of intermarriage between members of the white and the negro races. This does not constitute "the intermarriage of the races" any more than the occasional union of two individuals of different nationalities would constitute "the intermarriage of the nations." It is likely, also, that — if viewed literally rather than relatively — there will be more intermarriage than there is to-day. If viewed relatively, however, — that is to say, in reference to the increasing numbers of each racial mass, — there will probably be less.¹

We should also bear in mind the fact that the intermarriage of a small number of individuals, however undesirable to the intelligent majority of both races, would not constitute a process of "amalgamation" any more than the occasional intermarriage of French and German, or of the American and the Slav would constitute the amalgamation of their respective groups.

¹ This is the present tendency even in such an environment as the city of Boston. Such intermarriages as exist are largely cases of intermarriage between those who are so low in the social scale as to represent no characteristic attitude or tendency of either race, and even these have steadily decreased in number. See "Following the Color Line," by Ray Stannard Baker, p. 172, Doubleday, Page & Co., 1908. Mr. Baker gives the total of mixed marriages from the Registry Department of the City of Boston, as 35 for 1900; 29 for 1903; 19 for 1905; — this in a city of more than a half million inhabitants. "Such couples" says another authority, "are usually absorbed by the negro race, although if they belong to the more educated class, they enter into natural relations with neither race." . . . "Barred out from the society he most admires, his mimicry only excites mirth, and when he touches the white race on the grounds of social equality, it is the meeting of outcast with outcast." — See pp. 60 and 148, of "Americans in Process," a settlement study of the North and West Ends, Boston, by residents and associates of the South End Settlement House, edited by Robert A. Woods; Boston, Houghton, Mifflin and Company, 1902.

For intermarriage, upon a limited scale, is one thing, and amalgamation — the gradual absorption and ultimate disappearance of a weaker social group — is quite another. Indeed, in the larger history of societies they have usually represented opposing and conflicting tendencies.

While, moreover, it is true that certain instances of intermarriage may occur in the history of our race contact in America, it is equally obvious that — in any event, with or without a personal or social culture on the negro's part — such instances will at rare intervals arise. They are arising to-day. They can never be wholly prevented; but the impression that the development of the negro race, its enlarging efficiency and intelligence, will in itself add to the frequency of intermarriage, or will itself increase the impulses of racial fusion, is, so far as one can now determine, totally unfounded.

Indeed, the tendencies toward actual intermarriage in any two racial groups are never strong, and they usually decrease in proportion to the nature and the degree of the differences to be "overcome." The degree of unlikeness marks the depth and persistency of the division. While the American may occasionally intermarry with human families such as the Russian or the Pole, or even with the Turk, he usually does not; for the normal disinclination upon each side has a natural basis in their varying or divergent cultures. The negro in America has, outwardly and consciously, no conflicting culture. He has accepted, in one sense, the peculiar culture of the land, and he has been included locally and politically within the same state.

So, also, has the Jew. But the fundamental culture of the Jew, that which draws him from the deeps of his nature and from the associations of his past, is Hebraic rather than English — is an older and more intimate possession than our own. Between himself and the Gentile there is thus little intermixture or intermarriage, the instinctive disinclination operating from his side perhaps more powerfully than from ours. The negro, too, though included locally and politically within our life, has accepted our culture — so far as he has done so at all — only in a secondary sense. For it is inevitable that fundamentally he should continue to be more Ethiopian than Caucasian, — more African than English or Latin or Celt or Teuton.¹

¹ It is sometimes assumed from quite different standpoints that the full development of the negro race, its highest life, and its enjoyment of the normal "rights" of a democracy, must involve the breaking up of its racial distinctness and the abandonment of its social segregation. That this is not the case is evident from the relations of the Gentile and the Jew. The Jew does not "degrade" the Gentile or destroy any "right" to which the Gentile is entitled when he carefully guards the conditions of intermarriage and excludes the Gentile from his table. Nor is the Jew conscious of political or social injury should the Gentile accept from his own side, also, the canons of a voluntary segregation. The parallel is not literal nor complete; yet it is sufficiently suggestive to indicate that there is much difference between the instinctive segregation of various groups and a barrier of political and social degradation. The highest development of the black and the white races on American soil need involve no necessary surrender of any legitimate or social "right" of the weaker, nor any necessary invasion of any legitimate political or social "right" of the stronger. For upon all questions touching the domestic and racial integrity of social groups (as both races may well remember) the issues presented by the injury of invasion are quite as serious as those which are popularly associated with the injuries of exclusion. Indeed, in America, we have been morbidly overconscious of the injuries of exclusion, and have thought too little, of late, concerning the injuries

In the cosmopolitan sense he has drawn much from us — and will draw still more as the years go by; just as he will also draw, through an enlarging mind, from every rich or liberalizing force, whether English or German or French or Japanese. It is altogether likely that he will learn in every school, and in every school gain something from and for humanity. But also in the interest of humanity, as well as in his own interest, the basis of his more fundamental culture will be naturally his own. It will take its more intimate force and quality from the depths in him which are deeper than the depths of his life here, which reach back to the store of those fathomless years in comparison with which the period of his existence on this soil is but a single hour. It is a culture which may offer him as yet no established heritage, no accomplished treasury of letters or art or science or commerce, — as these are known within the Western World, — but like the vast fecundities of the mysterious Continent from which he comes, it holds within itself strange, unmeasured possibilities of character and achievement. No one can believe, whether he be Theist or Fatalist or Materialist, that a racial type so old, so persistent, so numerous in its representation, so fundamentally distinctive and yet with so varied a territorial basis, is likely to pass out of human history without a far larger contribution than it has thus far made to the store of our common life and happiness.

of invasion — as our weaker groups of every sort throng and press upon the life and standards of the higher. The instinctive protection of the higher, narrowly pursued, is but a false and futile impulse of aristocracy; yet this protection of our higher groups, sanely and broadly pursued, will prove a sound and indispensable service to our democracy as a whole.

The deepest thing about any man — next to his humanity itself — is his race. The negro is no exception. The force and distinctness of his racial heritage, even where there is much admixture of alien blood, is peculiarly, conspicuously strong. This persisting and pervasive individuality of race is the ground and basis of his essential culture — by which I mean not the formal product of a literature, a religion, or a science, but that more intimate possession which a race draws into its veins and blends within the very stuff and genius of its being from the age-long school of its forests, its rivers, its hungers, — its battles with beast and fever and storm and desert, — that subconscious, ineradicable life which stirs beneath its deliberate will and is articulate through all the syllables of its every stated purpose. In the deeper sense, no negro can escape, or ought to desire to escape, the Africa of his past.

This is the culture which no culture adopted here from another race can quite transform: it is this which, in every land where its individuality and significance are given any collective representation, will divide the peoples of the African and the Teutonic groups. Even though the negro race in America acquire, as I trust it may, the thus-far richer and lovelier possessions of our heritage, — our art, our knowledge, our wealth, our industrial aptitudes; and even though its military and political loyalty may be — as it has always been — unquestioned, yet its deeper culture will not be ours, nor will our deeper culture be fundamentally its own. It will hardly be a possession which — like the fundamental affinity of certain other peoples — has its roots deep in a soil common to them and to us, a culture

which has revealed in terms of social efficiency or collective achievement a basis of racial reciprocity.

What other human families can do, what, in their social ends, they will do, we largely know. What the negro race, as a race, can do or will do, our own race does not know. Viewing the social achievement of human groups not as a commercial or mechanical condition of affinity, but as a symbol of social self-revelation, our race does not and cannot know what that race is. Its unforgettable mystery is itself. The white man fears and shrinks — and sometimes strikes — not primarily because he hates, but because he does not understand. The thing in the ignorant negro from which he withdraws is not the ignorance, but the negro. The subtle tendencies of social approximation, of amalgamation, of intermarriage, overcome last of all the obstacles of mystery — the barriers of the unintelligible. If there be mere weakness, it can be given strength; if there be ignorance, it can be informed; if there be poverty, it can be enriched; if there be merely a strange tongue or a new wisdom, these can be put to school or we can be put to school to them; but if the deeper genius of all relationship — the self-revealing self — be absent, we have not the clues of understanding: that which life seeks through all its seeking is shrouded and hid away. We do not blame Africa for not having created a common art, a collective culture, an efficient state. We have instinctively demanded them not because they are indispensable in themselves, but because they are the media of self-revelation. The ultimate basis of intimate social affiliation is not individual (as is so frequently asserted) but social. It is not the inadequacy of exploration

which has left Africa in its isolation, so much as the confusions, the ambiguity, the inadequacy of its self-expression. Africa itself, in any of the intelligible terms of social experience or institutional achievement, has never spoken. The race is undiscovered, and its soul unfound.

No language, therefore, of other races, no acceptance — however brilliant or faithful or effective — of the formulas and the institutions of other human groups, will quite avail. For that which race would ask of race — as it contemplates the issues of racial and domestic fusion — is not the culture of *another*, even though that other be itself; but a culture of its own, its own as the instrument of its self-revealing. Especially is this true when the stronger race is one which, like our own, conceives its very destiny in the terms of social and institutional development. The being who, upon our solicitation, sits opposite to us at the feast of life, may be (not impossibly) a sinner whom we must redeem, a weakling whom we must empower, an enemy whom — on the morrow — we must fight or must forgive, — but hardly the Inscrutable. And that within the Inscrutable from which we are here withdrawn, by some far pre-natal force, is not simply its mystery but Itself.

II

These are but additional reasons why the culture of an educated class among the negroes of the United States will hardly become an instrument of social leverage through which the weaker race is likely to become involved in any considerable fusion with the stronger.

Its deeper force, its more intimate individuality, will continue to be African. It is a truth which becomes the more significant when taken in its relation to the fact on which we have already dwelt — the fact that with this group (as with other social groups) the tendencies toward amalgamation, toward the abandonment of the race's individuality, are least evident within its higher levels. The Africa which claims them is the Africa which they have claimed.

And just as in the deeper sense the American negro cannot escape the Africa of his past, so he cannot escape, and will not desire to escape, the Africa of his future. This consideration, viewed in its larger perspective, is perhaps even more important than the other. The negro, unlike the American Indian, is not included as a social totality within our industrial and political organization. Quantitatively, the negro does not begin and end among us. The Indian is "all here." The negro is not all here. He has, rather, the most profound relations — historically and racially — with the nearly one hundred and fifty millions of a vast and portentous continent. Indeed, I am inclined to think that just now the two most significant facts in connection with the larger race-problems of the modern world are the educated, efficient, creditable negro life so frequently represented within the limits of the United States — and the reëmergence of Africa.

If the negro were "all here," were included quantitatively, as is the Indian, within our borders, there might be some basis for the contention that the Africa of his past will be forgotten, that, in the slow passing of the generations, what is peculiar and estranging in

his genius and what is divisive in his fundamental culture will possibly be overlaid and overcome. But this is not the case. The absorption of the American Indian would close the existence of the Indian. The assimilation of the American negro would not absorb the negro. Rather, it is probable that that absorption, and the creation here of the vaster aggregate of a semi-negro group, would be made the basis of a still greater African infusion. For in that case the Africa of the Orient would be found waiting at the heels of the Africa of the Occident.

The old isolation of the negro's continent is gone forever. To the southward the problems arising from the conflict of the Boer and the British; at the North the problem of the English relations with Egypt and the Soudan, and of the French relations with Morocco; along the Congo and throughout equatorial Africa the issues presented by the methods of the Belgian, are drawing the threads of African development up into the loom of our international interests and policies. Whatever may be settled or unsettled as to that continent, whatever may be discovered or undiscovered, if any one thing is more clearly evident than another it is this, — that with length of time its significance and importance will not recede; and that, however gradual the progress of its larger inclusion within the vivid consciousness of the modern world, this increasing inclusion is as inevitable as any human event which we can now foresee.

Nor is this movement of closer inter-relation solely from the side of ourselves. Lord Curzon has recently stated,¹ in the debates upon the Eastern situation, that

¹ Hansard's Parliamentary Reports (1908), IV, Vol. 191.



all Asia — from the obscurity of its central plateaus to the extremities of India — is stirring with a vague unrest (due, in large measure, to the result of the Japanese-Russian war), and that the lowest of its tribal groups has somehow learned that somewhere far to the northward there has been a great conflict in which a dark race has been victorious over a white race. In the life of Africa's untutored masses some have found a similar agitation; and yet, if such restlessness exist, I should be disposed to find for it a somewhat broader basis. If the news of the victory of Japan has been a factor in these situations, there have been other factors also. Under the prodding of our divisions and redivisions of the "spheres of influence," of punitive expeditions and monitory explorations, the self-consciousness of a Continent — even in its lower depths — cannot forever sleep. Nor can the relations of our international life be external merely. We cannot be busied with Africa as a geographical puzzle without desiring it as a commercial asset; and from commercial to military relations we advance even more directly, for the reason that it is not easy to trade where it is not possible to live. And inasmuch as others will enter or will wish to enter the market we attend, they, too, will wish to protect their agents and their barter. Thus a national interest becomes a phase of international policy. A question of international policy becomes, however, under any representative government, a question of politics, — for the party in power must seek popular support. Soon the issues brought into the foreground by the Kaffir serve to determine the alternations of party supremacy among the English (just as the issues presented by the

American negro have frequently put men into office and parties into power in the United States), so that what began as the intrusion of England into the affairs of Africa ultimately emerges as the intrusion of Africa into the affairs of England. Thus also is Morocco defining the party history of France, and thus the negro of the Congo is found to be alive and assertive within the career of Brussels and her king. A movement which began, therefore, upon every hand as a mere physical invasion has become — and will become increasingly — a whole congeries of social and political relations.

What the modern world itself has not escaped, and cannot now escape, can be escaped least of all by that social factor in this world which is so fundamentally bound to the peoples of Africa by the ties of history and of blood. I refer, of course, to the negro of the United States. But the clearer revelation of that bond, the pushing upward of the fact and significance of this relationship into our national consciousness, can hardly fail to be followed by two results. It would seem in the first place to make still more improbable, as I have already pointed out, the amalgamation, through intermarriage, of the black and the white races upon our soil. As the African race in its larger unity takes its new form and outline within our popular consciousness, as its larger magnitude and the vast weight of its undeveloped elements are more fully understood, there will be inevitable *recoil* within the masses of the stronger race, a recoil, however, which — because not immediately involved in any phase of our own sectional conflict — will not necessarily be accompanied by any

access of racial bitterness. The reaction from even the remoter possibilities of racial fusion will probably prove, however, to be decisive. For the social annexation of Africa by the white peoples of Europe and America would involve something less akin to fusion than to inundation.

The reaction among the white peoples which is likely to follow a popular appreciation of the new imminence of Africa, the increase of race-consciousness within the stronger group, is likely to induce an answering reaction within the weaker race, — a reaction even among its representatives in the United States. Indeed, for the very reason that their greater intelligence and their greater efficiency as a social force make them more sensitive to all impressions than the negro of Africa, it is not improbable that they will become early and effective interpreters of the continent and its races. Not that the bodily transference of the negroes of America to their older land will seem either profitable or possible. I have dwelt elsewhere upon the weakness of such a policy.¹ But the continuing citizenship of the masses of the race within the United States need not shut out the negro from the helping of Africa. It may prove, indeed, the basis of a sounder and more interested coöperation.

Such an expectation may, to many, seem chimerical. It may be that the conjecture is unfounded. And yet, can we be mistaken in supposing that the dumb and helpless peoples of that one vast negro land, goaded into an awakened life and constrained, as a factor in policies they cannot comprehend, to minister to visions which

¹ See pp. 56, 57, of the author's "The Present South."

they know not how to share, will hardly look in vain to the one group within the inhabitants of modern states which might give them a kinsman's voice?

I well know that among some of the intelligent negroes of America the very subject of Africa is like the skeleton in the closet. They would keep well within the background their affinity with an older and weaker world, that their own origin may be forgotten in their progress. However natural such an impulse may be, it is, I think, doomed to rejection by the intelligent majority of the race.

The large masses of the unintelligent in America itself have made formidable indeed the burden of negro leadership. The strain upon its resources has been great. Here, moreover, the negro leader, of the better type, has had to bear the weight of problems imposed from above as well as those which have issued from below. The conditions of the development of the race within a democratic society have forced into the foreground every conceivable type of political or social issue; a group almost wholly undeveloped has been forced by the exigencies of its situation into a consciousness of the issues, and into a participation in the controversies, of one of the most highly developed among modern societies. It has not been allowed — as would have been the case under normal conditions — to develop its own issues in response to the development of its own life; but, upon its own peculiar issues — issues springing naturally and normally out of its own needs — have been superimposed the social and political issues of the stronger group. If this has had its advantages, it has involved certain disadvantages of the

gravest sort. Not the least of these has been the complexity of the problem presented to the negro leader. In addition to the sheer weight of the difficulties involved in the ignorance of the negro masses he has thus had to face the questions presented by their abnormal situation. The result has naturally been a preoccupation with American issues, an almost complete absorption of interest and activity in the national rather than the international fortunes of his people.

As the reëmergence of Africa becomes, however, increasingly evident, and as the varied questions presented by its peoples appear and reappear within the consciousness of the modern world, I have no manner of doubt as to the response of the representatives of the race in the United States. Here is grouped, in a peculiar sense, the race's representative life. It will ring true. Its failure to respond — an attitude of deliberate indifference — would be impossible. Such a course would suggest that those finer motives under which the best forces of American society have brought to the weak the support of the strong, have failed of their essential fruit; for the true gift of every emancipating enthusiasm is not solely the emancipation, but the enthusiasm; is not liberty in its formal estate, to be selfishly enjoyed, but that liberty of the spirit which sees its own issues and leaps to espouse its own causes under all the forms, wherever found, of negation and repression. By all the psychology of its life it must so respond or must decay.

If this be "a counsel of perfection" there is no such counsel, but a suggestion of solid and immediate force, in the consideration that when the negroes of privilege

show a disposition to ignore the fate of the unprivileged the moral sense of the world is shocked and the position of the privileged is made measurably less secure. Many generations of history must pass before even the more progressive sections of the negro population will hold so commanding a place in the western world as to be independent of the moral solicitude of the stronger social groups. They may not wisely offend against the partial basis of their preservation.

Nor will they wish to do so. Partly through the operation of a community of interest, partly through a community of suffering, partly through the presence of prejudice from without, the sense of race identity has gained a deeper sensitiveness as time has passed. Their familiar readiness to respond to a "race-cause" or a "race-policy" (a readiness at times too great) will make them quick to claim their share in the fate of their fellows across the sea. A theatre of international activity will not be without its interest. But, above all, the higher sagacity of the race will perceive an opportunity of supreme magnitude and of historic dignity in the interpretation of the mind and life of that waiting, helpless, innumerable negro world. To assist it, however humbly; to serve, somewhat, in the reorganization and diversification of its trade activities; to aid a little in reversing the old and hideous policy of "profit through devastation," and to substitute more generally a policy based upon the fundamental and constructive culture of its resources; to help the world to think a little more of Africa and the Africans and to organize its international relations within that continent, not upon a basis of local ruin, but upon the more productive

basis of local development; and, in the light of America's own clear demonstration of negro capacity, to give Africa its voice and its chance, — such, to the intelligent negroes of the United States, will seem the only conceivable response to the challenge of the new African situation. And in that response they will find, inevitably, a new and higher sense of their relation to the world. Through the grace of a broader service of the now broader negro group, their own struggle will become less a struggle for themselves alone, and still less a struggle to lose themselves within the identity of another social mass. The very stress and truth of their stewardship will make forever impossible their self-obliteration or their self-despair. However impalpable its formal or political expression, they will have taken a continent for their ward; and those who — while the world looks on — assume such a part upon such a stage, must attain new dignities of conviction, and a new sense of usefulness, and a stronger and clearer consciousness of race.

Let no one imagine that I here anticipate a career of international meddling for the American negro. Formal and collective protest in relation to political and social evils will always have its place. But I have in mind a more fundamental service: the service, first of all, of men who are negroes and yet have learned how to observe and to record the facts, the men of investigation; secondly, men who are skilled in the methods of trade and agriculture, who can find new resources and new crops and can teach the better uses of the old; thirdly, men skilled in the problems of transport (the tragedy of Africa is largely its problem of transportation), that labor and foods may find their markets, and that the

whole task of distribution for people and for products may be reorganized upon those principles of efficiency which American genius has been so successful in applying: — the conqueror of Africa will be neither the explorer, nor the soldier, nor the diplomat, but the expert in distribution — though his work may perhaps involve the activities of all.

Into the various phases, however, of the modern service of the continent I may not enter here. Their discussion would demand a monograph rather than a suggestion. And yet the suggestion may serve as an illustration. For the career of African coöperation will possess its historic significance, its final dignity, and its educative force (for those who attempt it) by reason of its fundamental nature. It must begin at the bottom, for that is where the task itself begins. Political agitation will be of secondary significance. Yet those who enter into this coöperation and who serve well its far-reaching ends will not lack in any form of wholesome public influence; they must be — whatever their outward rank — the real counsellors of empire, for they will hold the secrets of contented and productive labor, of social stability and the general wealth.

It may be that this work must wait for white men. It is possible that the young and far-sighted negroes — trained under secular and religious auspices — who have already entered the African service represent no vital movement of racial interest; it may be that the negro's continent must be reorganized without the negro's help and must be rebuilt, by the masterful spirit of another race, over its people's prostrate or reluctant life, and yet I know that there are those

among the younger negroes of America who will quietly say: "It shall not be! We may not for many years be strong enough to do all that as men we would like to do; great unsettled issues wait us here at home. We know, however, that the world-problem is sometimes the way to the heart of the home-problem; that we may prove weak, but that there can be no such proof of weakness as the spectacle of our inactivity; that the task is great, but that if the intelligence now within the race refuses the burdens of its stewardship, the task will be greater still; that in the varied depth and scope of its appeal there is that which will give our powers their work within a theatre of distinctive use, annexing our fate in America — by direct inevitable relationship — to one of the world-changes of human history. We will begin in tutelage, but we will begin. Our science we will put to work to regain our immunity from the fevers of the tropics, and taking, by virtue of that immunity, our best of wit and skill into the central furnace of the task, and proving the mettle of the race within the alembic of its forces, we will win, out of our power to serve, a power to lead. We will make ourselves necessary. Upon the basis of our necessity to Africa we will achieve in still broader measure the sense of our necessity to the world, knowing that all that shall contribute to that sense will contribute to the integrity, permanence, and happiness of our racial experience. If the white man must redeem the black man's continent, it will not be because of our failure to believe and to attempt."

III

How far or how generally such an avowal will find response among the negroes of the United States no man can say. Those within any social group who rise to the higher policies of collective effort are not conspicuous in number. And yet such a response now represents one of the inevitable directions of negro thought, and it will gain in its definiteness and its momentum with every quickening and deepening influence which through education or opportunity touches the negro's life. The reëmergence of Africa means the broadening, here, of the base of negro solidarity, the inclusion within the present consciousness of the race, through old heredities, and through resistless affinities of instinct, of a whole negro world, — not as a mere subordinate section of some proud and alien stock, — but a negro world, big with mystery, sentient with an individuality which its obscurities have preserved and strong with an authority which its formlessness has defined. Here indeed is but one of the larger forces in that school of his self-discovery by which the negro — through his Africa within as well as his Africa without — is finding the appeal and the power of his race's life.

For the broadening of the basis of a race consciousness is — among an educated group, a group educated to the point of a self-conscious experience — the process of its intensification. Through that capacity for self-projection which is the privilege (or the penalty) of the educated mind, through the vicarious quality of the social imagination, the liberated spirit sees within each

of the masses of the social group with which it is identified the replica of itself, its other soul, asking a like deliverance. It is for this reason that the truest Christian is inevitably a missionary and that the truest culture finds the most inexorable bond with the fate and longing of the ignorant. It is this truth as well as that "consciousness of kind" which has been called the fundamental sociological postulate, that so far as the negro peoples are concerned, has made almost every intelligent man or woman — in some sense — "a worker for the race," a sharer in the race's suffering, a serious but rejoicing captive of its identity, its hope, its future. Those in whom the intensity of this racial life has weakened are those who have shut out the vision of its multitude, and have narrowed the numerical basis of their racial contact. Those whose doors are ajar, who walk, in fact or in imagination, in and out among the throngs of its population, — these behold and remember, and by the music of that murmur which sweeps through them from the fields of stirring but yet unawakened life they build and rebuild — patiently and not unconfidently — the structure of their allegiance. Those who think that the educated life will turn the negro from his race and will make him seek the destiny of another group, know little of the tendencies of the negro and still less of the tendencies of education.

THE INTEGRATING FORCE OF OPPOR-
TUNITY: DESPAIR AS A FORCE OF
DISINTEGRATION



CHAPTER VII

THE INTEGRATING FORCE OF OPPORTUNITY: DESPAIR AS A FORCE OF DISINTEGRATION

I

WE return again, therefore, to the fact itself. The impulses of desertion from the life and destiny of the negro race are moving within its lower rather than within its higher levels. At its higher levels the race betrays little tendency toward a weakening of the sense of solidarity; the tendency is rather in the direction of a stronger and intenser racial life. The educated negroes are keeping more closely than ever to themselves. Many who are so largely white that the fact of "color" is not observable, and who, by moving into other communities, might easily lose themselves within the masses of the stronger race, take no such course. Here and there one does so, but such instances are far less common than they were some twenty years ago. The power of the race to "hold its own" against all the forces of disintegration has been marked. It is a power which is increasing rather than decreasing, and it is increasing in direct relation to the progress of education. It is an issue of development.

The man who has dealt familiarly with the negro field-hand, the man or woman who has known practically no type of the race except the more ignorant among the negroes in domestic service, is often confident that "the first effect of education will be to make

the negro want to be a white man." But the chief consideration is not as to "the first effect of education" but as to its second effect: its result as a continuing process and as a consistent policy of the state.¹ And the field of observation — in estimating the results of education — should hardly be limited to the uneducated. The uneducated negro has known, as a rule, almost as little as the white employer, of the educated of the negro race; his associations with an educated world, having chiefly thrown him with an educated world of white men, are likely therefore to make him feel that the only access to it is through the white man's life — an impression strengthened by every opponent of a policy of negro education.

¹ I have elsewhere so fully discussed the question of negro education (see "The Present South," Chapters III and VIII) that I need not here enter upon details. When confronted, however, by the contention that education, as such, is injurious to the negro, one is reminded somewhat of Sydney Smith's reply to those who made similar objection to the education of women. "Can anything," he inquired, "be more absurd than to suppose that the care and solicitude which a mother feels for her children depends upon her ignorance of Greek and mathematics? It would appear, from such objections, that ignorance is the great civilizer of the world." So, in reference to-day to the vexed question of the negro, — there are those who seem to believe that in view of the alleged relation between education and crime we have only to abolish our schools in order to restore the black man to a state of innocence and industry. It would be interesting to inquire just what degree of ignorance and neglect, upon such a theory, may be precisely calculated as a condition of perfectitude in the moral development of negro character. That the old-time darky was, in fact, the educated negro of his period; that to-day the graduates of the reputable negro schools are incomparably the least criminal element of the race; and that it is only through systematic training that the negro masses can be made, however slowly and painfully, efficient producers as well as effective consumers and purchasers, — such considerations are everywhere having a larger measure of recognition.

Nor does the uneducated mind of any race know just what education will, for itself, involve. It cannot imagine. Just as few poor men who inherit a fortune ever do, or ever want to do, with their money what they once dreamed they would do with it, so — yet in a more inexorable sense — no ignorant man is likely to want to use an education just as he first imagined he should use it. Its chief possessions are, in the first place, not new possessions but new needs. New aptitudes accompany them, but these aptitudes are themselves the forces of needs still deeper and more imperious. Among these is the hunger for association. The profoundest need of every educated life is for another educated life. The deepened instinct, the educated impulse, is assimilative, accumulative, social. It demands and creates a community. Society itself has been builded by education, by knowledge, which deepens individual need — the need of mind for mind — and by the discipline which makes efficient that response to common needs which is represented in the defensive and constructive functions of the state.

The ignorant negro may have all sorts of crude ideas as to what he would do with himself if educated. But, as education comes, it does with him quite as much as he does with it. It takes him into the companionship of other educated negroes. It appropriates him in behalf of a common standpoint. It introduces him into the collective intelligence of his people. He comes to share their racial interests. He is involved within the formative tendencies of a class-consciousness and enters into the heritage of race ideals, policies, antipathies. This is the broader education to which he is

introduced by "education." With every new need he turns inevitably to those who understand and share that need. With every new power he turns to those who, sharing a like power and moved by a like interest, can — through union with it — increase its force and its fruitfulness. Thus the whole drive and pressure of his situation, from the side of its disadvantages as well as by reason of its advantages, is in the direction of his closer identification with the consciousness and the fortunes of his race. Under the conditions which surround him it is inevitable that as he becomes more of a man he will become more of a negro.

And as in this higher sense he becomes more of a negro, he will become more of a man, — more responsive to those collective responsibilities, to those social interests and instincts, which deepen the qualities of individual character. This does not involve his forfeiture of the freer standpoint of humanity. The citizen of the United States becomes more of an American as he becomes more of a man, becomes more of a man as he becomes more of an American. The acceptance of one's standpoint within one's national or racial group deepens, and does not destroy, one's share in the universal fortune of the universal race.

Yet in every social and collective sense it is inevitable that under all the influences which now engage him the negro should assume increasingly the negro's standpoint. The deeper impulses of his segregation are but his response to the larger sway of that consciousness of kind to which all the stronger peoples of history have answered. The growing clearness with which the race perceives its destiny, and the fidelity

with which it follows, will mark, indeed, the measure of its essential strength. With larger education and a more accurate self-knowledge it will find the force of its segregation less and less within the barriers of antipathy imposed by other groups, and more and more within the necessities and the satisfactions of its own development. The barriers of the advanced groups will play, and ought to play, their part. They present an element in that pressure from the side of the stronger race which — sometimes extravagantly, but on the whole wisely — has directly operated to intensify the solidarity of the weaker. But these barriers are external. The explanations and policies which are based upon them are partial rather than fundamental. That which turns the educated life of the negro race into the course and channel of its own development is the force of its inward necessities and aspirations, is an instinct from within rather than repression from without, is that call of Itself — of its own social individuality — which is strengthened by its expression and freed by its opportunities.

Nothing could be more misleading or more profitless in the conduct of an inquiry as to the results of education than to confuse the educated with the literate. The statistics of illiteracy — encouraging as they are in the study of negro progress¹ — have little bearing upon the general significance of education. The mere ability to read or to write, or to do both, does not make a white man “educated”; still less does it constitute

¹ The number of illiterates in the negro population of the United States 10 years of age and over was reduced from 70 per cent in 1880 to 44.5 per cent in 1900. See, for the statistics by States, the author's “The Present South,” p. 302.

"education" within a social group almost wholly given to agriculture, or to other rural or physical employments which demand no necessary development of this initial power.

It is, moreover, inaccurate to assume that the educational process is a mere quantitative extension of capacity in a fixed direction determined by a straight line. Under this assumption a little "education" may be indicated by registering a mark upon this line, and the still greater degrees of education may be precisely indicated by further marks upon this line in the same fixed direction. Thus it is assumed that the formal character and the ultimate result of the whole educational process can be predicted from the direction and the tendencies indicated by "education" in its earliest stage.

It would be difficult, however, to conceive of a more questionable inference. The educational process is not quantitative but stimulative. It is indeed formative, but the formative response is organic rather than mechanical. So far from maintaining a fixed direction, its direction, especially in its earlier stages, is likely to be changed at any point. The direction indicated within the period at which the individual crosses the simple boundary dividing the illiterate from the literate — as represented by individual aspirations or by personal and social habit — is often precisely contrary to the direction taken at a later stage. There are few of our boys who at the age of fifteen continue to retain those ideas about being a policeman which possessed them at the age of five; there are few adults passing far into any educative experience, whether literary or practical, who maintain the initial direction of

their earliest impulse; there are few social groups which after even a partial education maintain the first tendencies of a primitive industry without serious and increasing diversification. The initial direction of the educational process is not mechanically maintained in conformity with a straight line (so many yards of education indicating a like number of yards of the same kind of man); it is a process of liberation; and its chief service in its later stages — as it touches a social group without a long-established racial tendency — is to enable its members to change and to correct the crude initial direction of their first educational impulse. And this — viewed in the larger perspective — is precisely what, in the case of the negro race, has happened.

It may be objected that while the preceding suggestions may be true of the stronger race they are not true of the weaker, inasmuch as the psychology of the negro is not the psychology of the white man. That is in some measure true. The psychology of the Frenchman is not quite the psychology of the American. Nor is a negro merely a white man beneath a darker skin. But a fact is none the less a fact, and it is to the fact in the case, at this and at each other point, that our theory of the negro's psychology must conform. We must gain our notions of a particular "psychology" from the facts; we must not assume our facts from the basis of an assumed psychology. In reference, therefore, to the immediate question with which we have been dealing, the emerging result betrays no profoundly racial "color"; the negro as he becomes really educated does, in fact, correct such aberrations as may

have been manifested in the earliest period of his schooling; he does respond, indisputably, to the instinct of racial solidarity; he does claim, from within, his affinity and identity with his race's life; he does — with his increasing manhood — become increasingly and more confidently a deliberate inheritor of its destiny, a negro.

In the popular discussion of the effect of education upon our negroes we have sometimes given more attention to those in whom the educational process has been imperfectly initiated than to those in whom it has been partially completed. The immediate results of the three months' term of an elementary rural school in a log cabin under an eighty-dollar-a-year teacher¹ are assumed to be more significant than the data represented in the hundreds of negro men and women who, through long and intelligent sacrifices, have really won a foothold within the precincts of the educated life. The whole country, South and North, has given large support to the schooling of the negro race, but the task has been so prodigious in its proportions that it is hardly within the masses of these people (by reason of the limited application of the policy of public instruction) that we can look for representative results. These results are rather to be found in the ranks of the minority, a minority as yet inconspicuous, and — because of the social separation which obtains and which, I believe,

¹ The negro teacher, of course, is free, while not employed, to take up other forms of work, so that his professional income is supplemented from outside the school. The lot of the white teacher is often almost as poor. The inadequacy of the local revenues to meet the demands of proper professional remuneration for the teacher is one of the gravest problems of rural life, particularly at the South, but also at the North and West.

should continue to obtain between the stronger and the weaker race — a minority largely unknown by the casual observer. Yet it does, in fact, find creditable representation in almost every important American community. It is thus difficult to point out the results of education among the minority; it is easy to point out the crudities of education among the majority, for the majority (in familiar personal service all about us) are not negligible or forgettable. And yet as we pause, and give ourselves to our thinking and our remembering, there are few of us who do not know of the well-settled negro districts in our Southern and Northern cities, or of small but well-conducted negro farms, in which the quiet, decent, self-respecting men and women of this race are creating the negro home and are slowly but steadily advancing the level of negro life. Such negroes are exceptional, of course. Who could reasonably expect otherwise? Yet the point of chief significance is not that they are exceptional but, first, that they exist; secondly, that they are increasing rather than decreasing in number; and, thirdly, that by reason of the admiration accorded them among their fellows it is obvious that their leadership is accepted, and that their own progress is indicative of the maturer tendencies of their racial movement and an earnest of its more positive and more general advance.

II

The fact, however, to which I would here again recur is the nature of this racial movement in reference to the question of racial disintegration. Its whole animus

and direction are the other way. Here are those with the least thought of fusion and amalgamation, with the most thought of what the negro in America may become. And they are so because racially, intellectually, socially, they are not bankrupt; they have begun to create a racial wealth, however meagre, and to share a racial consciousness, however troubled; a wealth of memories — for they have begun to have a history; a wealth of present gain — for they have attained a competence, a home, and friends; a wealth of hope — for they have begun to share with one another those common deprivations and affections, those mutual responsibilities and interests which sober and clear the vision of the future: and the consciousness into which they come is that of men and women bound within a bond which they may bear, and inheriting a destiny they may attempt, because manhood and womanhood are not impossible within it, but still attainable, — the world offering them, at a cost however sharp, the nobler sufficiencies of life, its freedom to grow and its opportunity to serve.

Withdraw that education which has represented both the opportunity and the process of acquisition, and what becomes of this higher negro wealth and this finer self-consciousness of a thus self-respecting race? Let us admit its inadequacies, its imperfections, — how will you improve them? Will you improve them by destroying them? Will you strengthen the appeal of the negro's racial life by making that life synonymous with destitution? Is there a remedy for a defective racial pride in a denial of those things upon which an

honest pride is nurtured? Can you expect to hold men in patient allegiance to a race by withholding from the race itself the opportunities of self-expression and self-development? Will a man willingly remain a negro, or will a negro long remain a man, if the capacities of the one cannot be unfolded within the destiny of the other? Is it not abundantly obvious that the man cannot remain a negro unless the negro can become at length a man?

"What then will he do?" I hear some one ask. "Will he become other than a negro?" I answer yes, and yet no. "But he shall not become a white man," is the retort, "we will wall him in; we have already done so; we will strengthen the wall, we will sink its foundations deeper, we will build it higher, and then we will house it over. He shall remain as he is."

No, he will not remain as he is: that is one of the few things in this strange and tragic case, of which we may be sure. He will not remain as he is. A race's life is an organic growth; it is not like a dead platform that we can safely build our houses over or our walls about; it is a living thing. You can force it back and can lay it prostrate, but when you have driven it even underground, it will reappear. Its living roots, its secret and extending tentacles of growth, will search beneath the familiar soil, will find their way below the foundations of your wall, will come up upon the outer side — intertwined with your own growth, blended with your stock, and terrible in their confusions and their fruitage. No; build your walls if you will, but give to this race also a garden of noble spaces; build your walls high in self-protection, but rear them as no dungeon above

another life. Let its growth have also its own sunshine, light from the same sun, nurture from the same air and the same rains; let all wise and pure conspiracies advance it. Its liberation will mean not its encroachment, but its self-fulfilment. Force it downward into degeneracy and abasement, and, having no garden and no sunshine of its own, its pervasive and intruding death will seek you out. Your sounder health depends less upon its repression than upon its freedom.

And yet there are those who seriously contend that negro education and negro self-development will prove a peril to the white man's integrity of race! — little realizing that in all racial groups the prime force of disintegration is despair.¹ The negro's life cannot pass into the life of another race by the open ways of social acceptance and reciprocity, but "the underground passage" — the passage through his complicity with the white man's vice — is always open to him. With every weakening of his collective courage, with every lowering of any reasonable hope, with every weight added to the unequal burden of his labor, you relax the pride of his conscience, the nerve of his racial self-esteem, the vigor of the bond of those reservations and

¹ It is sometimes assumed that the disintegration of a racial group under the conditions of despair is equivalent to an easy process of "quick evaporation," — to be surveyed with equanimity by the stronger group. But the soil of social catastrophe, whether individual or collective, is not the wholesome earth but society itself. Decomposition, with all its noisome horrors, must proceed within the enfolding contact of the larger and stronger group. A defeated race does not die instantly into oblivion; it dies first (through long and tedious processes of self-perpetuation) into the life of the group prevailing; dies as its despair makes union with the sins of the strong, into the lower life of the race above it.

fidelities which every man, however lowly, throws — or wants to throw — about himself, his home, his women, his children — and you break up, bitterly and desolately, the very foundations of his race allegiance. The arch-enemies of race integrity are those white men who have become the strident opponents of negro development. The fomenters of the race's despair are among the factors of its disintegration. The promoters of racial fusion, the real, though unwitting, apostles of amalgamation, are no longer the Abolitionists of the East, but those anti-negro extremists of every section who in their war upon the opportunities of this weaker race would put the foundations of its integrity upon the shifting and dissolving basis of its self-contempt. You cannot in that way build up a white race — a race already full of initial confidence, — much less can you in that way build up a black race.

How, I again ask, can the negro be expected to cling to his race-world with simplicity of feeling or tenacity of purpose if that world be chiefly synonymous with humiliation, and if the only creditable or honorable world of which he knows is the world of another people? He who increases for the negro the legitimate compensations and satisfactions of his own world deepens within him the formative attractions of his race, binds him within its hopes, annexes him through ultimate and self-evidencing forces to its interests and its future. Those who are defeating the tendencies toward amalgamation are the friends of his progress, the combatants of his despair.

First of these, in point of honor, I will venture to put the men and women of his own group, who, despite de-

sertion from within and discouragement from without, are making, with unpretentious fidelity, a clear and consistent demonstration of negro life, — clean, wholesome, self-contained. Second, I will put those of every latitude — indeed of every nation — who, coming to watch this modern birth of the negro consciousness into a new and strange self-knowledge, have remained to pray rather than to scoff, and to help rather than to accuse. These influences outside the race, coöperating with its truer representatives, are providing, through the securities and the opportunities accorded it, the real forces of its integration, the powers of its self-possession and its self-development. For the solidarity that is thus achieved is from within. Its strength — the only ultimate strength of any social group — is the strength of a life self-chosen. Its integrity is not a reluctant and artificial attainment from without, a result of external pressures and prejudices, failing when they relax and therefore as insecure as the alertness of other groups; an integrity never really its own because thus dependent upon the presence and activities of dispositions outside itself, — but a race integrity of its own, because protected by the inclinations and dispositions of its own spirit, responsive to its will and growing with its growth.

A negro race integrity so founded is the only sort that is really founded anywhere. You cannot found the integrity of one race in the aversions of another race. You cannot base the life of one people upon a foundation solely existent in another people. You cannot force the negro to continue to be a negro merely by resolving that the white man shall continue to be a white

man. You must annex the negro to his own race and his own future by the forces of his own choice and the instinctive movement of his own growth, or you have not annexed him to his race at all. It is for this reason that the old philosophy of repression has utterly broken down. Our millions of mulattoes, our deeper degradations of infertile vice, are evidence of its futility. I would not be misunderstood. I have already indicated that certain phases of our self-protective discriminations were necessary in their origin; some are necessary still, — especially where the black masses are formidable in numbers and the lack of education has left them with a real race standpoint and a racial self-respect wholly undeveloped. But the remedy is, therefore, no perpetuation of repression, but opportunity. Deliverance lies not solely in the white man's baldly assuming the perpetual attitude of the policeman over his treasure, but in giving the negro a treasure too; and, as he becomes slowly conscious of his treasure, he himself becomes also a policeman, on guard as a man and as a race above his own. Keep him forever in his bankruptcy and his destitution, without a life to attract him or a treasure to conserve, and these millions will become conscious of their race only to disown it and to betray it, — a despairing and devouring menace to the wholesome stability of our own life, and a noisome indictment of the perversity or the incapacity of our statesmanship.

III

So far, therefore, am I from believing that the factor of the negro in our population is a sound reason for

postponing a policy of "compulsory education," that I am persuaded that the negro is one of the stronger arguments for such a program. Those who believe that the separate integrity of our racial groups should be protected and perpetuated should, indeed, be the last to oppose any policy of Church or State which will contribute to the respective forces of their self-development. To bring the masses of the weaker group into the circle of opportunity is to bring them "within the range" of their better leadership. Their ignorance involves their isolation. Their isolation represents not their own helplessness alone but the helplessness — in reference to themselves — of those higher forces within their race which are organizing the mental and spiritual conditions of its growth, fixing the direction of its aspirations, and shaping the nobler policies of its segregation. To give the masses of the ignorant into the shepherding of their better leaders is, in itself, — though the fuller reaches of education may necessarily be long delayed, — so to broaden the basis and the constituency of the race's higher life, that the growing passion of its selfhood, the clearer vision of its identity and its peace, become — though afar off — the possessions of the people.

The education of the multitude thus strengthens the tendencies represented in the education of the few. Education is the process by which the irresponsible are bound into the life of the responsible. It is the means by which a people, socially weak and organically unconscious of a collective life, is changed from a mob into a society, — from an incoherent aggregation of petty groups finding a bewildered and futile life under ignorant leaders, to one inclusive, coherent group, re-

sponsive to the better leadership and the larger policies of the race. If the curse of the blacks lies in the ignorant power of their petty leaders, in church or lodge, it is because their masses have never been brought within the power of what is best in the race's life. There can be no dethronement of bad leaders except through the enthronement of good ones, and there can be no enthronement of the good until a more generally distributed elementary education has bestowed, among the people, a capacity to understand and an opportunity to follow.

It is true that popular education will sometimes subject them to the advice of educated demagogues (a peril not escaped by the people of stronger races), but it will also introduce them to capacities which will enable them to test that advice upon its merits, will subject them to the counter-arguments of truer leaders, will draw them up into those sobering processes of feeling and reflection which always attend the enlarging life and the growing responsibility of social groups. A more efficient organization of negro life will bring its risks, but the risks of intelligent organization, with the natural divisions which intelligence will involve, are as nothing in comparison with the morbid, brutal, unreasoning solidarity that has so frequently prevailed. After all, the only way to civilize men is to introduce them into civilization. Those who think that the educated negro leader is a more dangerous guide for his people than the ignorant preacher of the cross-roads, are probably comparing our present educated negro leadership at its worst, with the old cross-roads preacher at his best. The average educated leadership among the

negroes of to-day may be bitter, but it is not irresponsible. The irresponsible are few. But our uneducated negro leadership — having none of the old affectionate relations with the educated opinion of the stronger race — is irresponsible as well as bitter. There can be no breaking of its power except through that enlargement of the scope and the efficiency of education which, bringing the masses of the race within the contact of its better minds, will break both the power of the ignorant and the bitterness of the wise. The same fate which has kept the many in darkness has kept the few in bitterness; the giving of the sheep to the shepherd is, in a sense poignant and evident and inexorable, the saving of both.

For it is not merely true that there would be less bitterness among our educated negroes if there were less to be bitter about, but it is well to remember that a large factor in the distress and confusion of their experience is that baffling ignorance in the masses of their race which is largely the basis of its incapacity to follow anybody anywhere. Education will not instantly avail. The educated do not at once make more intelligent followers (or leaders) than the ignorant. The first effect of education in any social group, whether among the poor of Russia or among the negroes of America, will be distracting and divisive. There must be experience also; and education is a necessity not as a substitute for experience, but because as it touches the capacities of apprehension, of memory, of comparison, it is the one force which makes experience available.

But through a popular education that leads into a freer experience and through an experience to which

education can contribute its standards and its discipline, the vague, shifting, inchoate masses of an ignorant and unresponsive negro life may be slowly drawn into the sway and order of its better minds. There will be factions and parties; they exist to-day. There will be radicals, conservatives, opportunists; they are found in every national or social group. But there will be one race, conscious not only of its race but of its oneness, able to judge and fitted to follow, — as its leaders suffer and endure and *lead*. The tug and strain of an answering popular life, the tightening cords of an efficient fellowship, will bring to their abler leaders that joy which is the sovereign remedy for social madness — the sobering sense of definite responsibility, a sense of responsibility deepening and broadening within them as though responsive to the elective ordination of a vast ecclesia, and imposing those common obligations which give to every leadership its finer sanity and its ultimate steadiness.

To give to the negro leader, even when "unsafe," a larger and more intelligent constituency, will do more than anything else to make a man of him. Nothing educates a leader so thoroughly or so conservatively, whether in the Church, the State, or "the labor union," as to give him responsibility and to put a constituency at his back.¹ It is an education not only in caution, but in power. It saves one from that sense of despair in which our futilities confuse us by their multitude and betray us by their irrelevancy. But when

¹ See "The Social Unrest," by John Graham Brooks, Chaps. X and XI, on the conservative results produced in the socialistic forces of Germany by the gradual accession of responsibility; The Macmillan Company, New York, 1903.

we must act for others, when the fate of thousands is dependent on us, their needs enter into us and add through strange and subtle infiltrations their light and reason to our own, — giving to us their deeper insistence or their corrective truth, and enabling us by virtue of their fuller experience to divide the irrelevant from the immediate and the specious from the good.

Stronger even than that power which is the *sense* of power, is the bond of that renewed acceptance which is found in the sense of popular coöperation. It gives to every leadership its highest satisfactions, — for as the leader chooses, in the interest of his multitudes, the pathways of the common progress, he himself, through their very progress in these pathways, is chosen anew as the expressive instrument of their advance. Their every step is a new acceptance of decisions which he has made, a new suffrage to powers which he has gained. And their choosing of him means, and will mean always, his choosing of them: — they have heard him and have answered; they have approved his strength and have crowned his gifts. To his freedom and his peace they are forever necessary, for their life has been the form and the forum of his self-expression. Though they may misunderstand him and betray him, theirs are the crude endeavors and the hoarse voices which have moved within him as the imperious sanctions of his combat, his combat for self-conquest and self-development; by those instincts of inarticulate need through which they have been bound to him he has been bound to them. They are his people.

IV

The deeper influences now at work, therefore, upon the negro race — both from without and from within — are operating as the forces of integration. From without, the reëmergence of Africa is likely to be followed by two results: in the stronger race by an impulse of recoil from any possible tendencies toward negro amalgamation; in the weaker race by the broader and deeper self-consciousness of the negro group.

These external forces operating upon both races toward the creation of a closer but higher segregation of the negro group, are coincident with the inward movement of its own experience as reflected in its educational development. It has gained the school of its self-discovery in that finding of itself which education inevitably imposes, as well as in the new-found significance of the larger negro world. The education of its leadership has involved an increasing rather than a decreasing consciousness of race, due partly to the force of pressure from without, but due also to the increasing sufficiency and the deepening responsibilities of its heritage from within. As the race's identity has become self-chosen, its integrity has been more deeply and more securely founded. The gradual inclusion of the negro masses within the scope and promise of the educated world is slowly bringing them within the horizon of a common fellowship, is binding them into the conscious destiny of a race choosing — not a parasitic — but an individual career, and, by the very need and progress of its multitudes, rewarding and annexing,

upbuilding, reënforcing and reabsorbing the higher and freer capacities of its leadership. It is the old, old story of the need of power upon the one side, and the power of need upon the other.

THE FATE OF THE STRONG

CHAPTER VIII

THE FATE OF THE STRONG

I

THE sympathy which our world has given, and has rightly given, to the negro of these Southern States should not be permitted to obscure the situation of the stronger race. All may readily observe the suffering of the poor man of the streets. The man who is not upon the streets, whose lot is not familiarly associated with any of the external conditions of misfortune, is not observed so easily. Indeed, he is seldom observed at all. Walled about by the privacies of his business or of his household, he is shut within the precincts of an instinctive or deliberate reserve.

The negro, associated through slavery with the outward conditions of misfortune, and still burdened with the natural legacy of unequal powers, has stood clearly within the view of a considerate public interest. Not that that interest has ignored the stronger race, and yet here, too, its response has been due to the external challenge of obvious occasions — to the tragedies of war, to the poverty of the masses, to the humiliations of reconstruction, to the burdens of political insecurity. But the deeper aspects of our fate are little known; they are not often pondered even by ourselves. Like the shadowy backgrounds of social tradition or personal assumption, they lie within us as the forces of our kinship with one another rather than as our explicit challenge

to the interest or sympathy of the world. Of these we seldom speak. We sometimes half believe them to be forgotten until, in the sharp shock of some definite occasion, or on a journey into other scenes, or in some silent moment of self-revelation, the fate of our divided land flashes its significance upon us. Our States, our communities, our neighborhoods, are the abode of white and black: ours is a world of inexorable divisions; divisions deeper than inclination, or will, or habit can express; divisions not of race alone but of race conjoined to strength upon the one hand, and to weakness upon the other. Here the strength, with whatever individual exceptions, lies upon one side; the weakness — with whatever exceptions — lies, as a whole, upon the other. The stronger race must live, must find and equip and free itself, must rear its children, — thronged, environed, influenced, profoundly determined by the weaker.

A weak group of a like race would present one problem, a strong group of a different race would present another; but here in one group are peculiarly represented — as within an enfolding world of unceasing contact — the weaknesses against which our climatic tendencies have instinctively forewarned us and the race from which our social heritage and our political history have most sharply divided us.

The very fact that the one peril has been as inevitable as the other, and that the division has proven at times as ineffective as the forewarning, has but added to the torture and the burden of our conditions. Those who live within a different scene, who conduct the simple transactions of daily life as members of a homogeneous racial

group, naturally enough do not immediately or easily perceive the pressure and significance of our situation.

Industrially, it is imperative that the weaker group should preserve itself from exploitation at the stronger's hands, but it is quite as imperative that the stronger group should preserve itself from those tendencies toward exploitation which are constantly invited by the very presence of the weaker. There is nothing more perilous to the normal standards of social feeling than the presence of a large and distinctive class of a closely related population too ignorant and too weak to protect itself. It is easy to say that the case of such a population should appeal to the chivalry of the strong. And so it should.

And so it does. It is well known among us that the chief burdens of the negro are economic rather than political; and that he suffers more from discrimination in trade than from discrimination against his suffrage. The appeal to chivalry, to the protecting kindness of the stronger race, has found response. Its story — the daily, hourly offices of a disinterested friendship, — the strong leaving their own business and giving of their own time in order to protect the weak from the cupidity of the "loan-shark," from the pitfalls of the "mule market," or from the legal consequences of their own frailty — is, though so homely in its occasions, a chapter of varied and recurrent interest. I know of nothing simpler or happier in the history of race relations. But the task, in its magnitude, is overwhelming. Chivalry, like every other quality of social life, has its quantitative limit. There is not enough to go round. In no actual or conceivable human

society can one class in the population universally and efficiently assume the task of protecting another class against the consequences of its helplessness. I do not know that it would altogether be best for the weaker if it could. The stronger class is bound to do its utmost, through every legitimate institutional provision, to aid the weaker in ceasing to be helpless; but it must confront the fact that institutional processes are slow, and that in the long period of delayed development it will find within its own life (no matter what the quarter of the world in which the scene is laid) the tendencies that would exploit as well as the tendencies which protect, the men of self-interested trade as well as the men of a disinterested chivalry. Education is long; its own numbers are divided.

II

As the South becomes "modern," industrial, cosmopolitan, — as the familiar affections of slavery-days no longer preserve the personal touch between race and race, the impulse of the old chivalry, even among the few, is modified both by custom and by preoccupation. But the weaknesses of the weak persist. Here are constant invitations to fraud, to discriminations, — lavish opportunities for the cynical and the brutal. The chief sufferer is not the weaker group, but the group thus afforded a rich support for its coarser elements and its lower tendencies — elements and tendencies which a normal and homogeneous life might more effectively dislodge or modify. Low standards in the services rendered by the negro to the community are not so

serious as the low standard of the service he exacts: low grades of goods, cheap, adulterated qualities of food, poor houses at high rents, petty loans at extortionate interest, top-heavy mortgages that embitter the victim and harden the heart of the lender; — a constituency, which, however innocently, will float the less efficient or less creditable element thrown off from the commercial or professional life of the stronger group; the declining merchant annexing a negro trade, the discredited lawyer annexing "negro business." This is not to say that negro business, professional or commercial, is necessarily discreditable; many of our honored men in medicine, or at the bar, or in banking and merchandise, have always had a negro clientele, but they have not selfishly specialized in that direction. They have not served the negro because he lacked standards of expectation or because they could cheat him with little effort or rob him with little danger. Yet their old and honorable service to him has found its competition, — its competition at the hands of those who promise more and perform far less.

For how inevitable it is that the type and standard of the demand should largely determine the type and standard of the supply, and how inevitable that that demand and that supply should act and react upon each other not in mechanical detachment from society as a whole, but in subtle organic relation to the factors of all demand and of all supply, — in labor, in trade, in the professions, in every department of our reciprocal industrial relations. A low saloon instituted for the "nigger trade" is entered also by the lower elements of the white population, competes therefore with the white

saloon, and pulls in the direction of its economic and moral level every saloon within the city; street-car accommodations, public facilities of every type, even the sanitary conditions of our public buildings, have a tendency to seek the average level of the community-demand, — a level affected automatically by ignorance in every class, but especially affected by the serious proportions of the weaker race. The penal system of the State, morally indefensible as it is, punishes every white prisoner, and every prisoner of every grade, with a penalty more serious than the duration of his term (the penalty of the very nature of the institution) by reason of the fact that the whole system was naturally conceived in reference to the disproportionate criminality of the population which would inevitably become the chief subjects of its restraint. Those who imagine that the only curse has fallen upon the negro know little of the reactive power of institutional provisions.

It is to this point that I would again and again return. That the negro is, as a class, ignorant and weak, that he enters upon his relations with the stronger group upon such terms as the stronger may impose, seems, upon a superficial view, a situation of peril to the negro. But the deeper peril is to the life of the strong — low economic standards opening the way for our economic vices, low intellectual standards yielding prizes to the promptings of the charlatan, low moral standards offering perpetually an occasion for pity but an occasion also for lust — in the young, the untried, the weak, as well as in the brutally depraved; — an enfolding and ever-waiting world of opportunity for darker tendencies, a world unlike that of any other weaker social

group because the group itself is relatively so large and because its weakness is, in its total mass, so abnormally disproportionate to its strength.

For a stronger group to be involved in such conditions is to be subjected to something more than the "pull" of deteriorating forces. It is to be subjected to an atmosphere. No man, except the peculiarly strong and great, is at his best when habitually dealing with forms of manhood lower than his own. The context draws him into its phrases. He responds to the hourly pressure of his social contact. The very vehemence of his reaction from the negro, in manner and desire, is the assertive instinct of his self-preservation, as it struggles with the slow, remorseless logic of his situation. He will not become the negro, but as little will he — in the freer and higher forms of his social heritage — become adequately himself. And what is true of the man, except under conditions which I shall attempt later to define, is true also of his race. Every efficient class in living and effectual contact with a class less efficient than itself inevitably bestows upon the weaker some measure of its efficiency as a gift, and receives from the weaker some measure of its inefficiency as a burden. Thus *do* the strong bear the infirmities of the weak. A class which is too ignorant and too weak to protect itself has at least escaped the fate of that greater peril in which, sometimes, the strong become themselves defenceless against their own disintegrating forces.

III

But, it will be surely urged, the negro is really not too weak to protect himself. His helplessness is arti-

ficial rather than real. Give him politically the instrument of his self-protection — put the ballot in his hands — and you have preserved the weaker race from despair and the stronger from itself. It should not be necessary again to analyze the fallacy involved in the assumption that there is any necessary protection to the negro in a universal and unrestricted suffrage.¹ Nor need I again dwell at length upon the truth that in a restricted suffrage there should obtain — as between race and race — a level and impartial equity both of law and administration.² And yet were the laws as to the suffrage always equal both in their letter and their application, and were the suffrage universal as well as wholly unrestricted, it would still be important to remember that the ballot as a social power is — except in organic relation to other forms and expressions of service and efficiency — no constructive social instrument. With it or without it the political status of any social group will tend to conform, substantially, to its general economic and social position in the life of the State. With the ballot — as with the other forms of social self-expression — men do what they are; you may rescue them from everything except themselves. And human nature being everywhere substantially the same, and our formal political procedure being what it is, a stronger class, determined to prevail, has always at its command for effective use the one element that remains constant amid all the various exigencies of the political struggle — the element represented by the weaker class itself. This class,

¹ See p. 18, of this volume.

² See pp. 194, 195, of the author's "The Present South."

with its persisting limitations, is one of the fixed factors of the situation: laws may change, State administrations may come and go, national parties rise and fall, but — within the local scene — the weak themselves remain, in the contact of group with group, as the supreme instrument of the strong.

In a Southern State with which I am familiar, the State Legislature had ordered a popular vote upon the question "Shall a Constitutional Convention be called together?" The declared purpose of the proposed Convention, as announced by the dominant party, was the disfranchisement of the negro voters. The negroes of one of the more important counties of the State, stirred by their popular leaders, took an unusual course and decided to vote upon the issue. As the blacks in this particular county outnumbered the whites by more than two to one, there was a measure of consternation among some of the members of the stronger race. The local "boss" of the Convention-forces showed, however, no perturbation of mind. The sample ballots were printed and circulated in advance, as custom ordered. They were in the familiar form. Upon the unoffending slip there were but *two* lines, one at the top reading "For the Constitutional Convention," and the other at the bottom, reading "Against the Constitutional Convention." The negro leaders secured the blank tickets as soon as distributed, and proceeded from group to group, and from meeting to meeting, to instruct the masses of their illiterate voters. The directions were simple. They were rehearsed over and over till copy-perfect: "Put the cross at the end of the bottom line!"

The election was held. The negroes in illiterate hundreds marched solemnly into the booths and marked their ballots. The ballots were freely voted and fairly counted. There was no violence, no destruction of ballot-boxes, no irregularity, no fraud. And yet it was immediately obvious that a county with a preponderant black majority had gone overwhelmingly for the Convention. How was it done? — The local boss of the Convention-forces had merely advised, in a quiet way, that the official ballots distributed at the booths be passed out to the voters upside down.

The illiterate negro voters had put the cross, according to their instructions, at the end of the bottom line. When upside down the top line — as they surveyed it — was at the bottom, the bottom line at the top. In their activity to record their disapproval they had recorded their approval; and the negro masses, without coercion and without the manipulation of the returns, had explicitly voted in behalf of a movement for their own disfranchisement!

The incident is vividly suggestive rather than literally typical; and yet it is illustrative of a situation which under one form or another is perpetually recurrent. Ignorance cannot be protected against itself. Under the forms of free democratic procedure, the politically weak cannot be stayed from delivering themselves, by one method or another, into the hands of the politically strong. In the political relations of two groups — one representing approximately the elements of actual power, the other the elements of actual and obvious weakness — the forms of a free democracy are the very forms through which the will

of the strong is the more likely to find its almost unmodified expression.

One might naturally assume that the weaker the group the greater its opportunity in a democracy, for the governmental assumption of democracy is supposed to be the value of the individual; but democracy, as we have it, has political regard not to individuals, but to aggregates; it yields nothing — except as a second thought — even to minorities; its governmental policies, its administrative processes, are expressed through the dominant aggregate. The majority is usually the form not through which the individual rules, but through which he abdicates. It may be apotheosized as the collective individual, but the individual is so lost in the mechanical processes of associated action that when government begins, the Collection becomes everything and the individual becomes nothing; the man is submerged in the State. Under no form of political organization is a minority so helpless or the individual so insignificant as in that particular formulation of democracy, that exaggerated enthronement of merely temporary majorities, with which we are familiar. Its evils are incident to the South only because they are common to our country as a whole.

The weaker social group, not divided among different parties, but ranged, through tragic historic blunders, as a race-party against a race-party represented by a stronger group, is necessarily condemned, therefore, not simply to learn its lessons through defeat alone, but to find itself almost without representation in our local administrations. It should be remembered, moreover, that the weaker group — under exter-

nal leadership—has represented the earlier organization of a race into a race-party; the stronger race-party was in its origin defensive. The white man's race-party found its precedent and justification in the race-party of the black man. Yet the weaker is now the defensive and the defeated. Not only is it prevented from sharing, alternately, in success and failure, but it is found locally in the position of formal organization against that social and political aggregate which represents the forces of ultimate social strength, and which possesses in its hands—and will necessarily continue to possess—the instruments and the machinery for the attainment of our political decisions. The invalidation by the Supreme Court of this or that detail in any local constitution of this or that particular State would be almost insignificant in its effect. The arbitrary prevalence of race, the absolute political control of the stronger group, is not solely dependent for its expression upon any isolated technical device. The fate of the strong is their strength. Were one device invalidated, another, within a few weeks, could be established. In control of every formal instrument of social or governmental self-expression, the stronger group, under that aspect of itself as a race-party which its history has imposed, will continue to identify itself with the very being of the State; and the cogency of its contention—in view of the fact that the local basis of the opposing party continues to lie within the masses of a weaker and politically unpractised race—will naturally mark the measure of its intolerance. For the State, being temporarily but the administrative form of the dominant aggregate, rejects the weaker

group as a factor of its self-destruction. The one group representing *en bloc* the efficiency of society, and the other representing *en bloc* its inefficiency (there being relatively no normal division of weakness and power between them), the stronger becomes so habituated to the conception of itself as identical with the State that arbitrary processes instinctively tend to dominate and to express the methods of our political procedure.

And it could hardly be otherwise. No weaker social group exercising the ballot *as* a group and voting as a group-party has ever been otherwise dealt with by any stronger social aggregate. And yet the natural limitations of the weaker group, serious as they are in reference to its own development, are more serious still in their reaction upon society as a whole.

I have dwelt sufficiently upon the insidious effect of arbitrary methods to indicate that the recognition of their inevitable rise involves no approval of a permanent policy based upon them. As the instances of arbitrary method have arisen, it would, however, require a wise judge infallibly to divide the indefensible from the defensible. Many of the privileges destroyed by them were less important to both races and to society as a whole than the privileges which were preserved. But the indefensible were abundant. And yet were all such methods indefensible, we may well remember that we have not yet interpreted with insight or with justice the problems of any situation, whether personal or social, when we have found a mistake or accurately labelled an iniquity. The deeper questions still remain. How, our average human nature being

as it is and things being as they were, could our situation have been otherwise? If certain actions or policies were *not* necessary, by what strange fate of nature, or deception of circumstance, did men come to believe them so? If men were deluded into a sense of peril, by what national solicitude of their more favored countrymen was their rescue from delusion — so important to themselves and to their whole society — attempted and commended? If they were the victims of obsession, how arose this obsession? — from no fact in their situation, from no unfamiliar crisis, from no industrial catastrophe, from no social or moral shock, from no close or abnormal association with untried and ominous conditions? If they were stark mad, is madness a self-chosen state of intellectual or social ease? Is not its suffering as real, the torture of its delirium as pathetic and as poignant, as the alarm and the pain of sanity? We have not explained a situation or dismissed its difficulties when we have found some one to blame.

IV

The fact was there before us, flashing as once flashed the sword of the Archangel at the gateways of our Peace, — the fact that into the old estate of its security and its pride the South could not return. It must blaze its way, yoked unwillingly within a strange fellowship, through untried directions into a new world. That each yoke-fellow should sin against the other was as inevitable as that each, at times, should show a happier will, — and help. That they have arrived at all, has been chiefly due, just as inevitably, to the stronger's power.

Yet every necessary or unnecessary injustice of either has reacted chiefly upon itself. Every ingratitude of the weaker has deepened that instinct for grievances which has added a faculty for unhappiness to unhappiness already great. Every brutality of the strong has just so far embruted its spirit, has just so far inclined its life to depend upon force rather than upon reason: every political deception has decreased our intolerance of indirection, has made more difficult the methods of wholesome political procedure and postponed still further that sound political rehabilitation which has been the deepest aspiration of our social progress. And waiting within these delays, touched and pressed upon by every spectacle of violence, by the standards of familiar feeling, by the assumptions of our public opinion, by the atmosphere of our factional discussions and of our average journalism, lie — as within the educative forms of their culture and their happiness — the children of the South.

Their fate is but the more serious form of ours. It is a fate which no living man has sought, which no living man, conscious of his obligation to his people and to the future, would willingly desert. And yet its remedies, largely lying in the creation of an intellectual and political freedom which shall become the instrument of a constructive criticism, are naturally delayed by the very conditions which demand redress. Yet these, too, we have not chosen; they, rather, have chosen us.

They are the conditions which naturally or unnaturally, rationally or irrationally, have arisen — historically and actually — from the very presence

of the weaker group, — a group weak enough for its power to be despised, and yet strong enough for its weaknesses to be feared; so unexacting in its demands that its standards of consumption are more depressing than its standards of production; so much in need as to be an occasion of compassion, yet so persistently conjoined with the great power of a political party thus far locally inimical to reputable government as to be an occasion of aggravation and suspicion; so easy, however, to cajole and to coerce that its presence has tempted into prominence the lowest forces of our political capacity, and yet so effective through defeat, so impossible — by reason of its potential peril and its external alliances — finally to compose, that the mere persistence of its presence has driven many of the abler forces of our political wisdom into an attitude of silence and inaction. We now and again have imagined we were free, that the negro-spectre was really laid. But in an instant some fatuous threat of an arbitrary political intrusion from without, or some revolting occasion of local crime, has again given into the hands of the party demagogue (or into the hearts of the sincerely timid) a new opportunity for the “realism” of political obfuscation.

Men have called it a “double” burden. Yet it is more than one problem added to the weight and exigency of another. It is one plus another, and plus all the complexities and anxieties created by their mutual interaction. Are we concerned with questions of legislation? They must be conceived both as problems of regulation and as problems of race; for, as the forms of restriction which affect one class of the population often bear but slightly on the experience

of the other, the task of equalization involves the strong in the temptations of injustice and the weak in the temptations of retaliation and discontent. Are we concerned as to the development of our labor? Our division lies not only between the skilled and the unskilled, but between race and race; the one — with instinctive solicitude — too jealously guarding the monopoly of its skill; the other — with abnormal indifference — too patiently insensitive to the appeal of industrial ambition. Do questions concern us as to the distribution of our labor? The great black masses of the untrained are withheld, by racial and climatic tendencies, from the normal movements of the general labor market of the country; the rest of the country does not want them and can hardly use them: we ourselves want them, but the incursion of white laborers which we also want is checked by the very conditions which demand relief. Are we concerned with the tasks of popular education? Long after we have decided the question as to whose taxes support the negro school, the instinctive popular reluctance to make public expenditures which must include the blacks (a reluctance which, however unjust, any average white population, North or South, has usually manifested in the presence of negro masses) will long prevent the development of such adequate facilities for general education as are demanded by every interest of the stronger race. Our white children must suffer, and do daily suffer, by reason of the absence of such a system as could have come far more readily into existence among a homogeneous people. We have our public schools. Their recent progress is among the happier evidences of our

popular sanity and capacity. But their inadequacies are part of the social cost of a situation which under every aspect of our development has made of our eating and drinking, our buying and selling, our labor and housing, our rents, our railroads, our orphanages and prisons, our recreations, our very institutions of religion, a problem of race as well as a problem of maintenance. Yet the price is one which, in so far as it has contributed, not morbidly or speciously but really, to our protection, to the conservation and integrity of the stronger race, has been not a tithe too great. The very dignity and necessity of the dogma of our protection has drawn, inevitably, some of the basest of our factions and impulses to seek shelter and excuse beneath its ægis. This has been the sorest burden of the cost. Yet, whatever its weight or its distractions, — rather than endure the alternative, rather than the further race deterioration which an absence of all divisions must have invited, we would have met it a hundred fold. To be blind, however, to its penalties is a price which we cannot pay. The fate of it has visited us with a poverty immeasurable in the terms of money. Its burden is of the general mind.

An abnormal absorption in the issues of race has tended to make real politics impossible to a people who, historically, have always possessed peculiar political efficiency; it has tended to denationalize the most instinctively national of American localities and to dehumanize (in the philosophical sense) a section which has temperamentally represented an element the most humanitarian and the most transcendental in our American experience. The weaker group has

suffered like the stronger. Because, however, the stronger *is* the stronger, dominating and chiefly representing the thought and being of society, its injury is the more serious, its fate the more tragic in its consequences to itself, the negro, and the nation. In the whelming and absorbing turmoil of the struggles between race and race — struggles which in our history have represented the very issues of social order — what opportunity has existed within the popular consciousness for the larger (and enlarging) politics of humanity — for the issues of national taxation, of public administration, of American trade and of our international relations?

The shadow and the burden of such a situation in the education of our youth, in the development of sound intellectual and social standards, are indescribable. It has been a fate of tragic preoccupation. Not rebelliously or bitterly, but wistfully, and with the real sadness of the patriot, an older friend once said to me: "I think I love my country; and yet its general interests and its common life have been forced into the background — are far away. I sometimes feel that I have ceased to be the citizen of my country, and have become, instead, but the citizen of a race."

THE EDUCATIVE POWER OF SOCIAL
REACTIONS

CHAPTER IX

THE EDUCATIVE POWER OF SOCIAL REACTIONS

I

IN so far as so abnormal a situation is the result of sectional or political antipathies from without, there should be little question as to the nature of the national response. Its spirit should touch with healing discrimination the tense nerve of an exaggerated consciousness of race. To threaten anew or to seem to threaten (subjectively they are equivalent) the security of the stronger group, is but to intensify the reaction of the stronger against the weaker, and to delay the popular acceptance of national, unstrained assumptions of feeling and opinion.

Upon the other hand, to touch this scene as though the nation were indifferent, is as unfortunate as to touch it as though the nation were intolerant. That would be indeed to assume that the citizen of the South has no country; would deny to him the tonic breath, which, sweeping from regions less troubled by his provincial fever, is quick with the vigor of varied aims, free with the broad vitality of American emulation, and wholesome with the power of our national horizons. Such a relegation of the South to the fate of its peculiar tasks would involve but the larger deliverance of its life to the stifling preoccupations which have threatened it, would call still further into exercise and influence the leadership which defines its policies exclusively

in the terms of racial conflict, and would intensify an isolation in which we should be forced to bear alone the burden of economic evils for which we were not alone responsible. Either an intolerance toward the South which would exaggerate its consciousness of the weaker group within, or an indifference which would weaken its consciousness of the larger group without, would be no service to humanity. But that personal and fraternal touch which might slowly dissolve the sharper accentuations of our sectional development, which might prove the spirit of our greater country to be not intolerant nor indifferent but aware, would — like some finer soul of policy within our politics — relax the taut, rigid faculties of negation and alarm, disperse the crude leadership which has expressed them, and release — as from the bondage of old nightmare — those capacities of varied opinion and of free achievement which make the meaning and the distinction of every true political society.

It is not sufficient to retort that the racial security of the stronger group has been established. That, at length, is true. But something waits — now attainable, and yet still to be attained. For that through which men achieve the finer power of freedom is the sense of security rather than security. Though not possessing security, men — through the sense of security — have been known to rear their empires into security and permanence; other men, though possessing security, have been known — under some haunting sense of insecurity, under some strange obsession of old and habitual fear — to wait, to doubt, to divide, to fail.

To this sense of security the South would come. The task, whatever the disposition of forces outside the South, must at last be chiefly hers. No one can conquer for her, or ultimately bestow upon her, that estate of her own mind in which she may permanently found the stability and the expression of her happier life. She could not ask it if she would, she would not if she could. Already in the zeal and fertility of her new industrial development, in the vigor of her educational renewal, in the social and political transformations by which the masses of the stronger race are for the first time sharing the perils and developing the capacities of collective action, she is shaping the freer forms of her self-possession. There is much of confusion: there will be more ere there is less. There are conflicting counsels as well as divided and dividing aims. There will be delay, stupidity, reaction, wrong. But it is a great fight; the greatest in its elemental significance that our country has yet known, and all the greater and all the more significant because its methods are not military — with their hardening reaction upon the more varied dispositions and sensibilities of men — but the freer methods of our institutional and social self-expression. Of the result, soon or late, no man can doubt. But in order that it may come earlier rather than later, and that it may assume stronger rather than weak and ineffectual forms, the South — with something more of conscious direction — will take her own part against the weakening obsessions which have beset her.

In so far as an exaggerated consciousness of race is dependent — as is largely the case — upon the mere local contiguity of two such racial masses, it is to the ad-

vantage of our every interest that the relative numerical proportions of the weaker group should be reduced. The general effect of education will itself be distributive in its tendencies, breaking up congestion at this point or that, and putting a more varied labor in intelligent relations with a more varied market. But it is to the immigration of a larger white population that we must look for still greater measures of relief, — a relief demanded, indirectly, by the situation of the negro as well as by the situation of the white man. The proportionate reduction in the numerical mass of the negro population will slowly tend to develop in the stronger race both a larger sense of security and a larger sense of discrimination. Not only will the white man in becoming more sure of his own security become increasingly ready to promote a sense of security among our negroes, but this increasing sense of security among the negro population will sensibly deepen and broaden the foundations of its thrift.¹

¹ "Among the secondary causes which determine the productiveness of productive agents, the most important is Security. By security I mean the completeness of the protection which society affords to its members. . . . The efficiency of industry may be expected to be great, in proportion as the fruits of industry are insured to the person exerting it; and all social arrangements are conducive to useful exertion according as they provide that the reward of every one for his labor shall be proportioned as much as possible to the benefit which it produces. . . . All laws or usages which favor one class or sort of persons to the disadvantage of others; which chain up the efforts of any part of the community in pursuit of their own good, or stand between those efforts and their natural fruits are (independently of all other grounds of condemnation) violations of the fundamental principles of economical policy; tending to make the aggregate productive powers of the community productive in a less degree than they would otherwise be. . . ." John Stuart Mill,

A larger knowledge of other classes of labor than negro labor will develop in the white population a clearer sense of discrimination. The employer will see that many of the bad qualities of negro labor are not due peculiarly to the fact that the laborer is a negro,¹

"Principles of Political Economy," Bk. I, Chap. VII, Sec. 6. See also "The Principles of Economics," by A. Marshall, Professor of Economics in Cambridge University, England, as quoted on p. xiv of the preface to this volume. It has seemed appropriate to refer to the monographs of Marshall and Mill, not because these authorities had reference to the American negro, but because they had not; and because it frequently happens that the deficiencies of the negro are viewed out of all relation to the human, fundamental conditions which so largely determine the development of the familiar economic virtues.

¹ "I think that no amount of immigration — however large it may be — will make it wise for this section of the South to dispense with much of the labor it now has. As our industrial development proceeds, we shall, I think, find use for the old labor as well as the new. In some fields of activity the negroes will be displaced. This displacement is now going on. But the negro who disappears at one point in our industrial system often reappears at another. He adapts himself to the changed conditions.

"While the South is thus likely to use all her labor, I am inclined to think that a marked increase in immigration will be of decided advantage to both races. Both races need a more varied labor situation. It is always unfortunate for one whole class to have a monopoly as employers, and for another totally distinct class to possess a monopoly as employees. The negro laborer should have the bracing competition of white labor. It will increase his moral steadiness and deepen his sense of responsibility.

"While the prevalence of higher standards will help the white employer, the new labor will also enable the employer to become familiar with other workers besides the negro. He will find that many of the negro's faults are not the faults of the negro as a negro, but that they belong to other labor also. Some of the negro's failings are peculiar to himself, but many of them belong to every race in the same industrial position. The man on a dollar a day is not necessarily

and yet that to the fact that he is a negro is due much of the abundance and tranquillity of our agricultural production. Upon the other hand, the negroes themselves will find that many of their grievances against the South are grievances which have their basis — in so far as they are real — in nothing peculiar to the South, nor in anything peculiar to the white man as a white man, but in the temperamental and habitual tendencies of the employer as an employer, particularly under simple agricultural conditions. Few things illustrate this more clearly than the fact that the negroes of the North show no predisposition to seek employment at the hands of the employers among their own race. The greater diversification of our Southern industrial experience, — the more national distribution of the negro population, and a more general white immigration — will show to each race some of the less obvious excellences of the other, will illustrate to each the merely economic basis of many of their respective misunderstandings, and will confer upon both, through the social reactions called into play, a freer opportunity and a larger capacity for discrimination.

industrious, grateful, well-mannered, and faithful to his contracts just because he happens to be white. Immigration will give us a more varied industrial situation in which the negro will be subjected to a more rigid economic test, but in which his qualities can be judged more fairly in relation to other labor working under the same climatic conditions." From an interview by the author published in the *Advertiser*, Montgomery, Ala., April 12, 1906. A fuller discussion of immigration and the labor question at the South is to be included in his later volume, "Issues, Southern and National."

II

The diversification of our labor situation will be in part the cause and in part the result of the diversification of our economic situation as a whole. The persistent monotony of our agricultural employments — with its inevitable consequences in the intellectual life of our rural communities — is partly due to the recently abnormal price of a single staple; a price which, through the unusual profits upon our cotton, has too far absorbed our activity in the production of our one easiest crop. The margin of our immediate returns has been large; the results, especially as contrasted with the poverty of the preceding period, have been grateful. It seems fatuous, therefore, to question the evident basis of monetary gains which have added so considerably not merely to the standards of comfort, but to the wider distribution of education. And yet we can hardly afford to forget that while education may follow from the actual possession of cash and from the sheer capacity to spend, yet the profounder education of men springs even more directly from the educative force of the processes of production. Production, rather than consumption, is the school of capacity. Great peoples are educated by what they are making and doing rather than by what they are spending. Under the challenge and variety of the creative forms of its self-expression, every human society finds its great elemental university. Intellectual resourcefulness, intellectual freedom, ease, efficiency, and force, are largely but the social reaction from the field of a varied, exacting, and therefore interesting, labor.

There was a former day when men said that "Cotton is King;" but the kingship of cotton involved the South in a depressing economic system, an economic system which could not have existed — such are the ironies of history — but for that invention of the conscientious New Englander which broadened, by a thousand fold, the market both of the staple and of the slave. What thus, at the initial point of cotton-manufacture, was accomplished by the genius of Whitney, is now being accomplished, upon its mechanical and commercial side, by innumerable agencies of invention and distribution. Whitney's contribution of the cotton-gin was but the single precedent of a complex and bewildering process. Since his day the fundamental problem of the utilization of the cotton staple has engaged, with ever increasing rewards, its thousands of experts in mechanics upon the one hand, and its thousands of experts in distribution upon the other. The responding and enlarging market is so great, both intensively in the increasing variety of its uses, and extensively in the range of the territory of its purchase, that there is now no price which the world will not pay to the South for keeping everlastingly at work upon its cotton.

The world may pay the price, but it is well to remember that the South — if it follow the temptations of economic preoccupation — will have to pay the cost. Indeed, from a strictly material standpoint, the absorption of the South in the mere growing of the one simple staple will at length cut us off from the enjoyment of its largest profits, — the profits of its manufacture; and our excessive concentration of interest and land upon a single raw material will so increase our dependence upon

other sections for the more varied necessities of life and comfort, that the sectional independence which we may have coveted as the reward of our larger income will be lost in the economic tutelage which our "prosperity" will create. So long, moreover, as one vast interest is so dominant among us, we deliberately narrow the basis of our economic safety. A calamity to this one staple, to the product itself, or to the factor of price, tends to involve our whole industrial estate in a common peril. The strength of every sound economic situation lies in that complexity and variety of the common industrial and agricultural production under which a surplus at one point may equalize a deficit at another.

Thus our economic security as well as our economic freedom are not less dependent than our intellectual progress upon our *relative* emancipation from the ancient "King." The tyranny of cotton in the older period seemed to be a tyranny over the slave, but it was really a tyranny over the South. It might to-day, but for that modification of its dominion which I believe to be in process, extend and fortify a tyranny over the South, not less exacting, though perhaps less obvious, than the old. Our remedy will lie not necessarily in less cotton, but in more of other things; and if we cannot have more of other things without having less cotton — then, whatever the losses of apparent but superficial income, less cotton! It may be that less cotton will mean more of cotton-money (the reduction of the supply involving a still higher price); it may be that this higher price will increase the economic temptation to the breaking point, and will bring under cultivation

a still larger acreage of now unplanted lands, and so still produce — more cotton. Round and round, therefore, may the vicious circle go. And from it there is no escape, except for the personal South, individually if not collectively, to cut straight through it, — to resolve that the supreme question shall be neither more cotton nor more money, but more life; and that no product, however great, which by the excessive absorption of the human elements of power — through the over-occupation of the child in the factory or the pre-occupation of the farmer in his fields — threatens our essential intellectual and industrial wealth, can be left wholly to the play of merely economic forces. Our abandonment of our monopoly I do not advise; our abandonment *to* our monopoly would be but the delivery of our strength to selfishness without, and to stupidity at home.

And yet such a declaration, though qualified with exact and abundant caution, will seem to the average "man on the street" and to the political economist of the older school, like "talking back at" the law of gravitation. It will seem as profitless as reading a homily to the Equator. There is, however, nothing more significant in the history of modern states than the increasing economic appreciation of the factor of *will*. Modern Germany is largely the result of the deliberate social control of economic conditions; peoples are everywhere entering upon the courses of their progress through that factor of selective choice by which they are consciously substituting the higher for the lower forms of wealth. Many a community will pay me more money, whether as a day wage or as an annual salary, to dig in its streets

than to teach in its schools, and the economic opportunity presented in the streets may be more constant than that offered in the schools; but my economic response will be determined by forms of interest and by a standard of values which money, in itself, cannot express. If I enter a factory, there may be an economic demand for me to work fourteen hours instead of ten, and it may be that, in a lifetime, I can make more money by working each day for the fourteen hours; but, here again, the fundamental question is not the money nor the time, but the life itself, the quality and fulness of my human experience as an individual: this, then, is the new "preferred wealth" of the world.

It is a force — this factor of selective choice, of conscious determination in the economic response of individuals and peoples — which economists have never really ignored, but the meaning of which they are coming increasingly to appreciate. Its popular recognition will come more slowly. The man, however, who now chooses a ten-hour rather than a fourteen-hour day — deliberately in the interest not of more money but of more life — would, fifty years ago, have seemed as exceptional as the contemporary farmer who deliberately chooses an educative rather than an uneducative crop. For the individual instances of so explicit and so conscious a choice may be rare, but one can see — over the broad and general scene — an increasing tendency toward diversification, a tendency resting naturally enough at first upon the more obvious practical advantages of a more varied agriculture, but slowly suggesting a recognition of its larger economic and social basis. The recognition of this basis need not obscure

the immediate advantages of such a course — indeed, a policy of diversification is a policy not merely of social satisfactions, but of material success; but the larger popular appreciation of such a policy will increase the volume and the quality of the conscious coöperation which should be everywhere accorded it. Its value lies not merely in its direct returns, whether intellectual or financial, so much as in the educative and constructive force of the social reactions which the South must receive into her life from a freer, larger world of more varied interests and occupations. While our activities are quickened and multiplied by our schools, and while it is thus true that to educate is to diversify, it is just as profoundly true that to diversify is to educate.

III

Every population, however, finds the basis of its reactions not merely in its industrial employments, but in its human relations. The environment of every conscious life is necessarily social as well as economic. Under the activities and habits of personal or collective contact men find those forms of their social and political self-expression through which they not only create their social wealth and their common institutions, but through which they *educate* themselves and one another. Every individual in conscious contact with things gets an educative reaction from the work he does; every individual in conscious contact with other individuals gets an educative reaction from the souls he knows and from the relations he establishes. It is in this sense that every man is educated by every other man; for even

when the one individual is wholly hidden from the other, the inter-relations of men are so subtly but indissolubly joined that the capacities or incapacities, the confidences or anxieties, the sympathies or hates of one man will affect — through vast distances or over the more insuperable barriers of class — the peace and the fortunes of another; may indeed help so to form some outward factor of his environment or so to color some inward state of feeling or opinion as to alter the choice of policies or the fate of character. The ignorant fear on the part of an Italian depositor in New York — through the social and financial interactions which it may call into play — may overthrow the bank in which he has kept his savings; the failure of that bank may so affect the conditions of public confidence as to disturb the exchanges of the country and involve the institutions of Minneapolis or New Orleans, — a catastrophe which, in turn, may leave the cotton or the wheat of thousands to rot within their fields. Upon the other hand, a small deposit made in a single city at one bank by the right man at a particular moment may save the bread of millions. In each case the factor of deeper significance is not the immediate catastrophe or the external rescue, nor the instant emotional effect of each, but the less obvious play of the educative forces released and discharged into the social organism by every factor within its limits. Long after the money, whether lost or gained, has been forgotten, the social “state-of-mind” induced by each of these men, in turn, will be affecting — and to that extent educating — the life of communities and of states.

Such incidents are but crude illustrations of the truth

that the individual man, in this world, may escape almost every calamity or deliverance except that which comes in the form of other men. And this at last — for the strong upon the one hand, or the weak upon the other — is the unescapable education. The reactions of social contact — from individual to individual — are so frequently neutralized by one another that the significance of particular impressions or of single incidents is sometimes inappreciable. But the more frequent these impressions, and the more these incidents are given the power of mass and the authority of numbers, the more profound and inevitable their consequences. It is for this reason, as well as for the reason that each distinctive group naturally possesses — where the internal demarcations of society are conspicuously drawn — a certain group-consciousness, or collective mind, that the interactions of class upon class, and particularly of race upon race, possess a significance so formidable and so pervasive.

It may at first appear that an isolated member of a stronger group, dealing with the isolated member of a weaker, receives no direct return. From individual to individual — in this or that incident of contact — there may seem to be no commerce over the boundaries of race. Such transference of influence as may be noted is apparently from the strong to the weak. The white man seems to be doing all the educating. He seems to be giving, the negro to be receiving. It is easy to note, even in a single incident of our race relations, how a touch of manner, an impulse of feeling, or some fixed assumption of thought may pass over into the negro's receptive mind. For this is the basis of one of the most

profoundly educative influences which operate upon weaker social groups — the influence which touched the domestic slave in our older plantation life and which so frequently touches, in other latitudes, those of other races or nationalities who are admitted into the closer relations of domestic service. But when the strong man finds the trace of the servant's speech in the speech of his child, he finds the sombre clue of a returning influence. Here is the symbol of a process of education which has been reciprocal, and which stops not with the child alone. That little lisp, that flavor of dialect, that syllable of a lower language, is but sign and parable of a commerce of impressions, sentiments, assumptions in which the weaker race is creditor as well as debtor.

This is the beginning. It does not, as has been suggested, stop with youth; still less does it stop (if the exchange ever really ends) with the cessation of direct impressions. The direct action of one race upon another is a great power, but the indirect reactions inaugurated within the life of each through its habitual contact with the other race are a power greater still.

The direct educative influence of the individual white man on the individual negro is appreciable, but the changes which are wrought upon this weaker or lower life through the play of the faculties of the white man upon the negro are slight in comparison with the changes slowly wrought within the white man's nature by the returning play of his faculties upon himself. The fact of deeper significance is not the mere pressure of a lower standard, but his cumulative modification of his own standards of self-criticism and self-direction.

Through the conditions of his familiar contact with less highly developed habits of efficiency, with forms of will more immature than his, he is deprived of that bracing and corrective force, resident in the standard of his peers, which — manifesting itself within every personal world as one of the higher forms of social co-operation — is, in fact, the moral equivalent of competition. He may sin and not die. His more exacting expectations of himself are not echoed from without. Of himself, as he would prefer to see himself, there is no spiritual mirror. The occasional tendency to take himself at his second-best is socially unchecked, and both his powers and his inclinations tend to assume the forms of approximation imposed by a life of habitual relationship with a mind lower than his own. To say that the stronger tends to become brutal because the weaker is brutal, or slovenly because the weaker is slovenly, is to touch the process only on its surface. The deeper fact is not that of imitation, nor yet that of contagion. It is that tragedy of recurrent accommodations, of habitual self-adjustment to lower conceptions of life and to feebler notions of excellence, which is nothing less than education in its descending and contractive forms.

The average man usually grows in the direction of his habitual approximations. The employer wholly surrounded by ignorant labor becomes practised in dealing with ignorance. The capacities in himself which might otherwise find exercise and expression, the capacities which intelligent labor might develop, are eliminated or weakened by disuse. Upon the other hand, the capacities requisite for dealing with ignorance are called constantly into play, gain strength from their

exercise, and become increasingly the forms through which his nature gains its self-expression and its self-development. We tend to become the things we do. The habitual handling of weak men forces into prominence in the individual the faculties by which mere weakness is controlled, forces into prominence in the community the types of mind — in our representative leadership — which are practised in utilizing the weaknesses of a lower group rather than in matching the powers of a vigorous and resourceful opposition.

Indeed, it is in the inter-relations of our racial masses even more than in the relations of individuals that the retrogressive and contractive influences of the weaker on the stronger have appeared. The saying that corporations have no soul has been declared to be one form of the confession that collective ethics are lower than the ethical standards of individuals. But the quality of the ethical standard is not the only element of difference. Collective action is the less considerate and seems the less sensitive because by its very nature it lacks the flexibility of individual procedure. The weakness of its formal processes is structural as well as ethical. It is sometimes lacking in conscience, but it is always lacking in adaptability.

When, therefore, group comes to deal with group, the stronger determines its relations with the weaker under the canons of a collective necessity which put all of the white race upon one side and all of the negro race upon the other. This is the situation within each group which checks the appreciation and neutralizes the inter-racial influence of the exceptional individual within the other, and which will show little change till the motive

of coöperation enters more largely into our racial policy as well as into our individual ethics.

And it is this situation which neutralizes the social benefit — as between the stronger and the weaker group — of personal criticism and intelligent though isolated opposition. The two groups are in direct juxtaposition; their interests are constantly assumed to be in conflict, but between these groups themselves there is about as much of the educative action and interaction of opposing forces as one might find in the carefully circumscribed relations of a blooded terrier and a sawdust doll. The terrier may lash himself at times into the fury of inspiring combat; may through the intoxications of imagined insult vindicate himself, in self-appeasing rage, upon the unoffending partner of his confinement; but the proceedings cease at last to be interesting even to himself. If the confinement is prolonged into the years (a fate too tragic even for the homely uses of illustration), he will return—in recurrent but ever briefer moments of self-delusion — to the fierce practice of his better qualities; but the intervals will be longer and the interest feebler, until, gone to waste in all the higher virilities of his breed, he at length drifts drowsily from meal to meal into the ignominy of a fat decrepitude.

The brute qualities of the dog are not the higher qualities of men; and yet the illustration need not obscure the normal dependence of our higher powers upon the forces of legitimate opposition. There are few things less wholesome, especially in the development of collective action, than the effect upon a strong group of the divisive but ineffectual contact of another. I do not assert that racial differentiations should always

and necessarily present the basis of social or political oppositions, but if they are in fact coincident — if two races do stand opposed in thought or interest — then the presence of practically unchecked power upon one side and of a practically defenceless weakness upon the other is more demoralizing to the strong than to the weak. It is not a good thing for any race to be perpetually dealing with another race with which it does not have to argue, which it may control without explanations, for whom it may think without an attempt at persuasion, and for whom it may act without any real partnership in responsibility. For the effort of a more efficient group to share responsibility — to include, by free and voluntary processes, every common social factor in every common social decision — forces the conscience of the strong up into finer forms of sensibility and discernment, impels a larger knowledge of human interests, and evokes both a larger power of intellectual comprehension and a higher and more complex political capacity. Anybody can rule by simple force. When power is given, the dumbest fool can govern, — if the whole of government is to impose conformity. It requires no political capacity outwardly to order all men by one man's will; but to rule through their wills too, to create, however slowly and gradually, a government through men rather than over them, is to receive and acquire, in still larger measure, the capacities we attempt to bestow, and is to win, in ever stronger forms, the manhood for which we provide.

Indeed, the ethical suggestion, the principle of social deliverance, which lies in every truth and aspect of our situation, we cannot escape. It is the only protection

of any strong man in habitual contact with a weaker; it is the only protection of a strong race in habitual contact with a weaker race. It lies enfolded within every inadequacy as its contribution to social power. It is the gift found in the hand of every individual or collective want. It is the secret of social wealth.

In each weakness of every lower social group, there lies an opportunity for exploitation; but in each weakness there lies also an opportunity to help. You may use the weak man or the weaker group in the one way or in the other, and by the nature of your use of this man or this group your capacities and faculties (which take their qualities from use) are yielded to an education which assumes descending and contractive — or ascending and expanding — forms. The injurious social reactions caused in the stronger by its contact with the weaker can thus be checked — and in measure overcome — only by the stronger modifying its revulsions by its compassions, and by so admitting and utilizing the educative power of its higher reactions as to determine its relations with the weaker under the processes of coöperation rather than repression. Its own gradual deliverance springs from its resolution to deliver. Its own dominant interests cease to be repressive, its larger powers — freed from their constraining preoccupation in the constraint of a weaker group — are released into the varied forms of a larger activity and a happier self-expression. And the weaker group itself, as it tends to rise, tends also to yield to the stronger both the direct coöperation of its growth, and the indirect coöperation of its inclusion within the momentum of the general progress.

For, as the stronger race withdraws its life, in its contact with the weaker, from the merely coercive or regulative forms of its expression, and tends to yield itself in larger measure to the forms of coöperative action, it naturally finds the basis of its approximations in sympathy rather than in compromise. Among the social reactions excited by its contact with the weaker race, the higher now tend to substitute themselves for the lower, and the partial reversal of the tendencies of the educative process gives to every element of power a new quality of gentleness and a deeper touch of magnanimity. This is the reason why, although the average man deteriorates under habitual contact with weaker groups, the exceptional man — in whom the occasions of weakness have developed the coöperative rather than the coercive instinct — is, whether alone, as was Livingstone in Central Africa, or submerged in the slums of our greater cities, the highest human type we know. Nor is this the least of the reasons why the exceptional citizen of the "Black Belt" of the South is so often regarded as the most adequate representative of our gentler and nobler life.

IV

But the exceptional man cannot be alone the theatre or the agent of our social policies. These must include the average man as well. The few may reign but the many are the world; and it is with the world that we must deal. The exceptional man, however, may give us — here as everywhere — the clue to general policies, not merely to their spirit, but to their principle. The

substitution of coöperative for repressive methods will slowly reveal the fact that the basis of our ascendancy as well as the basis of our security is a double basis. The educative reactions induced within the stronger group by the life of the weaker are given not merely a higher principle, a new and constructive method, by the coöperative instinct, but they are given a new and cumulative power. As men help other men, as race helps race, the slow rise of the weaker touches the level of the stronger with an upward pressure. The weaker group affects the stronger less and less as the dragging pull of an insensate or declining life, and more and more as the impulsion of a slowly rising and increasingly wholesome influence. The difference in the quality of its contact, between a social group which is organically alive and organically growing, and a social group, upon the other hand, which is organically dying, cannot be measured in the terms of cold and literal value. The level of the latter may be actually higher than that of the former, but the social contact of the one is disease, and of the other — however feeble — is coöperative power.

This coöperation of the weaker with the stronger is, moreover, largely independent of its desire to help, and may not be necessarily sympathetic. Indeed, if this lower group be really alive, if it be really a growing and not a decadent social force, its oppositions will be, at times, more helpful than its assistances. Its real co-operation is not dependent on its voluntary choice, but upon the sheer vitality and the subtle momentum of its progress. For there is something organic in the nature of the larger unity of society itself. As within our physical experience, one organ — however unimportant —

helps every other organ and helps the body as a whole, primarily by being alive and by not being dead, and then helps still further by the living processes of its own life, — just by its proper functioning, — so within the general order of society the active and growing group is a contributory and coöperative force. The laborer who begins really to think for himself helps the employer just in proportion to the activity and soundness of that thinking. He may not be especially interested in helping the employer, indeed he may chiefly desire to help himself, but his essential helpfulness — whether the employer perceives it or no — is none the less fundamental. That his thinking in one direction makes his mind more active in all directions, and makes him a more efficient laborer, is but the beginning of his contribution. His growing intelligence as a laborer compels his employer to approach him and to deal with him, more and more, through his higher rather than through his lower faculties, and by his thus unconsciously imposing upon his employer the necessity for intelligent appeals and for an increasingly intelligent adjustment of relations, his employer is himself forced to become more intelligent, is involved in the educational process of the workman. Education is thus both a social act and, automatically, a compulsory movement of society itself.

Few things in the general growth of intelligence among our negroes at the South are, therefore, of more far-reaching importance than the upward pressure of that intelligence upon the levels of the race above them. For the upward pressure of one group upon another group is as obvious as the pressure from individual to

individual. Not only does a race which is declining in efficiency have a tendency to pull the stronger into the descending processes of its ruin, but a race which is relatively lower has a tendency, if it be growing in efficiency, to involve the stronger in the ascending processes of its rise. As it thinks and knows, it compels every group which deals with it to think more and to know more. As it works better and wastes less, it impels each other race which enters into relations with it to take the better quality of its work, and the factors of self-control represented by its economies, into its own industrial or mercantile account. The laboring forces of other groups must themselves labor better and save more.

The employers of an improving and saving negro labor are also helped by the treble form of that upward pressure which an advancing lower group is unconsciously but unceasingly contributing to the higher. First, there is the direct contribution of an advancing efficiency not merely to the details of execution but to the larger policy of production; the employer may employ fewer hands, effect a more compact organization, and, by reason of the decreasing factor of waste, may estimate expenses and receipts with a nicety which increases both the stability and the profits of his undertaking. Secondly, there is also for the employer that indirect contribution to his capacities and his business which arises from his relations with a more effective labor. He may never enter it in his ledger, but life will enter it in the nature of the man. Though his "labor" may be relatively much lower than himself, he will have to deal with higher men in higher ways. Thirdly,

he will have to deal with growing men in growing ways. If they are growing, he must not only continue to be relatively higher, he must not only continue to be found at some old adopted level of advantage — but he, too, must grow. If a particular excellence of plan, or method of oversight, or manner of persuasion, or form of mutual commerce was adequate on yesterday, and they move upward toward it, he must move also. Their upward movement is one of those forms of social reaction within the weaker race which, however interesting, is at this moment not within the scope of the discussion. But as they move up, as they grow, their movement touches and impels his own. He may grow toward them in his sympathies, but their comprehension within his sympathies, like their intellectual comprehension within his policies, is in itself a process by which he must transcend them. For they themselves — however unconsciously — are ceaselessly at work within him, his growth being a condition of theirs as theirs is a condition of his own: and as they grow they contribute as we have seen, (1) the direct efficiency which comes from growth; (2) the indirect development of his efficiency which comes from intelligent contact and more effective oppositions; (3) that momentum of their movement which makes their contribution not only static but dynamic — that gift which is no mere result of growing, but the growing. This is the supreme service to every organism, to every faculty of every organism, which comes from any part or faculty — however lowly or unhonored — that is not dead, but living.

V

Such, indeed, are in some measure the processes of that more general social movement which in its larger aspect we call the progress of humanity. It is made of innumerable divisions. It is divided into classes and subdivided into races, or divided into races and subdivided into classes. It is found in families and in nations. Its unity is organized under governments which deny it, and disorganized under revolutions which affirm it. But it has survived the peril of its negations and the darker peril of its affirmations, just as it has survived and will continue to survive the passing expressions of party and the indestructible forms of racial and domestic segregation. Within the final order of its life there is no test of survival or of ascendancy except that condition of social health which has been variously defined, but which I will venture to term the capacity for the utilization of reactions. It might be defined more simply as the social capacity for self-correction, or as the power of fundamental appropriation. It is the power to transmute every possession of society — every relevant aid and every relevant antagonism — into the coin of social use, into larger and freer forms of self-possession. It is more than the survival of the fittest, it is the power which makes us fit. It is more than the power of adaptation to environment, it must adapt and readapt environment, whether it be economic or racial or political, as the social training-ground — the educative home — of men.

It perceives the nature of the reaction induced by this or that economic situation. It declares that if the



reaction be evil the situation must be changed, — that it must be changed not merely because it is damaging business, but because it is educating or miseducating men. It declares that an economic force may be made a human force, that it *is* just as much a human force — if put consciously to work in relation to human situations — as the electricity which through the telegraph we have put into every intellectual or social activity of experience, or the ether which through the skill of the surgeon we have put into therapeutics. It would ask that we so utilize the social reactions of an economic situation, and the economic reaction of social forces, as not merely to make our education of service in our industries, but to make the whole industrial organization of society of larger service to education. As men are educated more largely by their occupations than by their schools, there can be no ultimate education of society until the educational significance of economic situations and of economic employments — in their reactions upon individual and social character — are more consciously and more directly included within the policies of the state.

Yet many a man has the power to utilize the reaction which is induced in him by a field or an occupation, who has not the wisdom or the self-control to utilize the reaction induced in him by another man. So also is it with social groups, and so is it with races. How often have men been destroyed by situations through which — with whatever adversities — they might have reigned! For the reaction induced in the man by his habitual contact with a racial or social group is just as educative, to his damage or his advancement, as that from the occupation or the field. Each is a

factor in the active or the responsive environment of his nature. Each will contribute directly and indirectly either to that education which through its narrowing, contractive, descending forms will give to his manhood an ever hardening and coarser quality, and to his life horizons shrinking and overburdened ; or to that education which in its expanding and emancipative forms may so utilize the known reactions of his human contact as to turn adversity into power.

If he is really strong, he will be also wise. He will make no war upon the Universe. As he coöperates with its forces it will stand at his back. He will know that in so far as security and ascendancy are possible to any racial group, their basis will be found not in his preferences, but in Its realities. Yet, believing in himself, and therefore taking its realities for his preferences, he will create his institutions that he may share them, his opportunities that he may divide them, his integrity of race in forms so true that every race will necessarily protect it, and his social ascendancy in terms so efficient and so serviceable — through the qualities of its stewardship — that every group will instinctively bestow it. For such an integrity of race is protected by every group which through the freer processes of its self-development is led to deepen the instinct of its self-protection; and such an ascendancy is bestowed by every group which through its freedom to think becomes a thought-compelling, rather than a thought-repressing, force; which, through its sounder health and its larger capacities, contributes to the higher group, however slowly, not merely the upward pressure of its gains, and the indirect profit

of its resistances, but the dynamic impulsion of its growth.

Just as within the related and impinging units of every series the movement of the first transmits not merely a contact which assists and an assistance which impels, but motion itself, from unit to unit throughout the whole, so the progress of our human life within its lowest levels must involve—as each level bears upward upon higher levels—not merely a change in the static or relative position of units or classes, but the actuality and quality of motion. It is this which transmutes motion into momentum, and, in the organic world, accretion into growth. This is the gift of one to all,—the unseen beneficence of every advancing level however far submerged, of every group or race however lowly. To be so advanced is to be advanced by the valid suffrages of a far age contemporary with our toil, and of strange peoples now alive within our history. To profit by such progress—if we have so used the counsel of our affairs—is to be advantaged by that course of nature which is the will of Truth, the proffered friendship of Reality ; and to be so ascendant is to serve, and to be served by, the order and momentum of the world.

THE NEW COERCION

CHAPTER X

THE NEW COERCION

I

BEFORE leaving the subject of the educative effect of the reactions inaugurated in one social group by the capacities and activities of another, it would be interesting to dwell more fully upon some of its less obvious phases. Yet these for the present must remain unnoted.

The consideration of the action of group upon group within the South, must here yield place to a brief consideration of the effect upon the South as a whole, of the forces of that greater world of Western ideas and of modern institutions of which it forms a part. Under this aspect of our subject the South — and by “the South” I mean the dominant and representative element in its life — is viewed as itself a group placed historically and socially within the context of a larger fellowship.

Here again, however, the limitations of space permit only a passing reference to but a few of the more significant phases of our subject. Yet it is obvious that many of the issues of our American history which have seemed to take their form under the constraint of military or political power have been so adjusted by armies or by parties chiefly because they were of a piece with the inevitable movement of society itself. Mr. Lincoln’s observation that the issue of the Civil War would be

determined by "the preponderance of resources" was true, but true only in the sense that the word "resources" must be given something more than its military or its diplomatic usage. The time had in fact gone by for the creation of a modern state involved in a system of slave labor. The conception was an economic anachronism. In its conflict with the South, the "resources" of the North were in fact the armies, the wealth, the policies, the markets, the institutions, the literatures of the world: for every selfish interest or social aspiration of every class in every modern government was naturally enlisted upon the side of an industrial system associated with free labor, as against an industrial system representing a system of slave labor. The temporary victory of Lee, even the establishment of the Confederate States, could have availed nothing. The war, under one form or another, would have had to go on,—and the victory, under one form or another, must have brought at length the same industrial transformation. The South, however unwittingly, however heroically, had joined issue with the world. The world, thoroughly committed to a system of free labor as the industrial basis both of its competitions and its reciprocities, could not pause until the common standard of its adjustments and exchanges was finally secure. This is not to ignore the sentimental or humanitarian phases of the struggle; it is but to state them in another form.

Emerging in defeat from the issue of arms, it was inevitable, however, that the South should have been slow to appreciate both the moral and the economic significance of its results. We do not readily learn the advantages of freedom through the processes of con-

straint. We do not at once perceive the profits of free labor through an industrial situation in which — however inevitably — freedom is largely extolled and labor largely abandoned. We entered but painfully into the full philosophy of an enlargement of popular rights “guaranteed” under forms which so annulled the liberties of white men that the older desolation, wrought by intelligent armies, seemed preferable to the new exploitations wrought by the ignorant civil successors of their authority and power. Yet, in every deeper sense, it should have been understood that there could be no ultimate winning of freedom for the slave which did not involve the winning of the South for freedom. A popular faith in liberty is insecurely founded in policies of suspicion and repression. It is hard for real men to find their generousities through their humiliations. The school of our bitterness, of our scepticism toward the future of the freedmen and toward the larger democracy of the nation, lay not so much in our defeat as in the policies which followed it. Yet this Northern movement of retaliation and repression, offending that spirit of freedom which it had originally invoked, drew into the cause of the South those deeper forces of moral coöperation and of economic interest which slavery had estranged.

If the South had sinned against freedom in the name of property, the North was now sinning against freedom in the name of government. That common mind of right feeling, of good sense, and of economic health which had been arrayed against the South thus came, in turn, to the South's support, expressed itself in opposition to the policies of Reconstruction, in favor of a

sounder confidence in the forces of local responsibility, and compelled that ultimate readjustment of political power which placed the government of each Southern State within the control of Southern men. Against the program of Reconstruction and in rejection of the policy of repression, the soul and wisdom of the North at length took part. Within the very party of Abolition the program of coercion found its critics; for that was by no means an isolated protest against the disabilities imposed upon the intelligence of the South, which was voiced by the late Carl Schurz on January 30, 1872, in the Senate of the United States. His close affiliations with the war party of the North, his intense sympathy with the program of emancipation, and his peculiar personal associations with the development of the policy of Reconstruction make his words singularly significant. In his argument¹ for a policy of "universal amnesty," Mr. Schurz said:—

" . . . The end and aim of our endeavors can be no other than to secure to all the States the blessings of good and free government, and the highest degree of prosperity and well-being they can obtain, and to revive in all citizens of this republic that love for the Union and its institutions, and that inspiring consciousness of a common nationality, which after all must bind all Americans together. . . .

¹ See speech of the Hon. Carl Schurz, in the Senate of the United States, January 30, 1872, in favor of a bill removing the political disabilities imposed by the third section of the "Fourteenth Amendment to the Constitution"; reprinted from the *Congressional Globe* with the permission of Mr. Schurz, in Ringwalt's "Modern American Oratory," p. 93, and in Baker's "Forms of Public Address," p. 353; Henry Holt & Co., New York, 1904.

“Look at the Southern States as they stand before us to-day [1872]. Some are in a condition bordering upon anarchy, not only on account of the social disorders which are occurring there, or the inefficiency of their local governments in securing the enforcement of the laws; but you will find in many of them fearful corruption pervading the whole political organization; a combination of rascality and ignorance wielding official power; their finances deranged by profligate practices; their credit ruined; bankruptcy staring them in the face; their industries staggering under a fearful load of taxation; their property holders and capitalists paralyzed by a feeling of insecurity and distrust almost amounting to despair. Sir, let us not try to disguise these facts, for the world knows them to be so, and knows it but too well. . . .

“Just at that period when they lay prostrated and exhausted at our feet, when the destructive besom of war had swept over them and left nothing but desolation and ruin in its track, when their material interests were to be built up again with care and foresight, — just then the public business demanded, more than ordinarily, the coöperation of all the intelligence and all the political experience that could be mustered in the Southern States. . . . When universal suffrage was granted to secure the equal rights of all, universal amnesty ought to have been granted to make all the resources of political intelligence and experience available for the promotion of the welfare of all.

“But what did we do? To the uneducated and inexperienced classes — uneducated and inexperienced, I repeat, entirely without their fault — we

opened the road to power; and at the same time we condemned a large proportion of the intelligence of those States, of the property-holding, the industrial, the professional, the tax-paying interest to a worse than passive attitude. We made it, as it were, easy for rascals who had gone South in quest of profitable adventure to gain the control of the masses so easily misled, by permitting them to appear as the exponents and representatives of the national power and of our policy; and at the same time we branded a large number of men of intelligence, and many of them of personal integrity, whose material interests were so largely involved in honest government, and many of whom would have coöperated in managing the public business with care and foresight,—we branded them, I say, as outcasts. . . .

“When the Rebellion stood in arms against us, we fought and overcame force by force. That was right. . . . But when the problem presented itself of securing the permanency, the peaceable development and the successful working of the new institutions we had introduced into our political organism, we had as wise men to take into careful calculation the moral forces we had to deal with; for let us not indulge in any delusion about this: what is to be permanent in a Republic like this must be supported by public opinion; it must rest at least upon the willing acquiescence of a large and firm majority of the people. . . . We desired the Southern whites to accept in good faith universal suffrage, to recognize the political rights of the colored man and to protect him in their exercise. . . . But what did we do? . . .

“ . . . If you desired the white man to accept and recognize the political equality of the black, was it wise to embitter and exasperate his spirit with the stinging stigma of his own inferiority? Was it wise to withhold from him privileges in the enjoyment of which he was to protect the late slave? . . . To their honor be it said that the colored people, following a just instinct, were among the first — not only in the South but all over the country — in entreating Congress to remove those odious discriminations [against white men] which put in jeopardy their own rights by making them greater than those of others. From the colored people themselves, it seems, we have in this respect received a lesson in statesmanship. . . .

“We are asked, shall the Rebellion go entirely unpunished? No, sir; it shall not. Neither do I think that the Rebellion has gone entirely unpunished. . . . There was a proud and arrogant aristocracy. . . . They looked down not only upon their slaves, but also upon the people of the North, with the haughty contempt of self-asserting superiority. When their pretensions to rule us all were first successfully disputed, they resolved to destroy this Republic and to build up on the corner-stone of slavery an empire of their own in which they could hold absolute sway. They made the attempt with the most overweeningly confident expectation of certain victory. Then came the Civil War, and after four years of struggle their whole power and pride lay shivered to atoms at our feet, their sons dead by tens of thousands on the battlefields of this country, their fields and their homes devastated; their fortunes destroyed; and more than that, the whole

social system in which they had their being, with all their hopes and pride, utterly wiped out; slavery forever abolished, and the slaves themselves created a political power before which they had to bow their heads; and they themselves — broken, helpless and hopeless, in the dust before those upon whom they had so haughtily looked down as their vassals and inferiors. Sir, can it be said that the Rebellion has gone entirely unpunished? . . .

“Believe me, Senators, the statesmanship which this period of our history demands is not exhausted by high-sounding declamation about the greatness of the crime of rebellion, and fearful predictions as to what is going to happen unless the rebels are punished with sufficient severity. We have heard so much of this from some gentlemen, and so little else, that the inquiry naturally suggests itself whether this is the whole compass, the be-all and the end-all of their political wisdom and their political virtue; whether it is really their opinion that the South may be plundered with impunity by rascals in power, that the substance of those States may be wasted, that their credit may be ruined, that their prosperity may be blighted, that their future may be blasted, that the poison of bad feeling may still be kept working where we might do something to assuage its effects; that the people may lose more and more their faith in the efficiency of self-government and of republican institutions; — that all this may happen, and we look on complacently, if we can only continue to keep a thorn in the side of our late enemies, and to demonstrate again and again, as the Senator from Indiana has it, our disapprobation of the crime of rebellion?

“Sir, such appeals as these which we have heard so frequently may well be apt to tickle the ear of an unthinking multitude. But unless I am grievously in error, the people of the United States are a multitude not unthinking. The American people are fast becoming aware that, great as the crime of rebellion is, there are other villainies beside it; that much as it may deserve punishment there are other evils flagrant enough to demand energetic correction; that the remedy for such evils does, after all, not consist in the maintenance of political disabilities; and that it would be well to look behind those vociferous demonstrations of exclusive and austere patriotism to see what abuses and faults of policy they are [possibly intended] to cover, and what rotten sores they are [meant] to disguise. The American people are fast beginning to perceive that good and honest government in the South, as well as throughout the whole country, restoring a measurable degree of confidence and contentment, will do infinitely more to revive true loyalty and a healthy national spirit, than keeping alive the resentments of the past by a useless degradation of certain classes of persons; and that we shall fail to do our duty unless we use every means to contribute our share to that end. . . .

“No, Sir, I would not have the past forgotten, but I would have its history completed and crowned by an act most worthy of a great, noble, and wise people. By all the means which we have in our hands, I would make even those who have sinned against this Republic see in its flag not the symbol of their lasting degradation, but of rights equal to all; I would make them feel in

their hearts that in its good and evil fortunes their rights and interests are bound up just as ours are, and that therefore its peace, its welfare, its honor, and its greatness may and ought to be as dear to them as they are to us."

That such an appeal from such a man should have failed of its immediate purpose is but an added illustration of the power and persistence of those coercive forces within which the life of the South had been involved. Only "by little and little" were these disabilities swept away.¹ Not until 1877 were the military forces of the North wholly withdrawn from the Southern States, — and they were then withdrawn, as we now know, not in obedience to those impulses of an uncalculating generosity for which Mr. Schurz had pleaded,² but in conformity with a compact in which

¹ While the amnesty bill of 1872 removed the disabilities from all but about 750 individuals (according to Mr. Blaine) these were largely those whose personalities were of special significance to the South and whose coöperation was peculiarly indispensable to the nation; among them were such natural leaders as Z. B. Vance of North Carolina, L. Q. C. Lamar of Mississippi, J. L. M. Curry of Alabama, Judge J. H. Reagan of Texas, John A. Campbell, Joseph E. Johnston, G. T. Beauregard, W. J. Hardee, and William A. Graham. A number of these were soon relieved of their disabilities upon their personal petition, but many regarded the conditions as unnecessarily humiliating. The last personal act relieving disability was signed February 24, 1897. Full amnesty was not granted till the passage of the general act of June 6, 1898. (See James Ford Rhodes, "History of the United States," Vol. VI, pp. 329, 330; New York, 1906; also, "Reconstruction, Political and Economic," by W. A. Dunning, Lieber Professor of History and Political Philosophy, Columbia University, pp. 203, 204; Harper and Brothers, New York, 1907.)

² "We mixed our generosity with just enough of bitterness to prevent it from bearing its full fruit. I repeat, we can make the policy of

a Democratic House ultimately delivered the presidency to the North in return for liberty to the South.¹

And yet it is obvious that the possibility of such a compact — the popular vote for Mr. Tilden which so directly challenged the supremacy of the Republican party — was an evidence of the truth that Mr. Schurz, despite his immediate defeat, was but interpreting the ultimate verdict of the country and of the world. The long delay made more difficult the South's apprehension of the significance of her industrial transformation, darkened her appreciation of the better possibilities of the negro, limited her knowledge of the broader impulses of the North, chilled and shrivelled upon every hand that sense of fraternity which is one of the profounder springs of civic rejuvenation, — and yet this delay need not obscure for us the fact that the power which spoke through Mr. Schurz was the resistless force of that universal reason, that common and self-executing energy of justice, which was now fighting for the enfranchisement of the South precisely as it had fought for the emancipation of the slave. Such forms

generosity most fruitful only by making it most complete. . . . You must not do things by halves if you want whole results. You must not expose yourself to the suspicion of a narrow-minded desire to pinch off your gift wherever there is a chance for it, as if you were afraid you could by any possibility give too much, when giving more would benefit the country more, and when giving less would detract from the beneficent effect of that which you do give." See Baker's "Forms of Public Address," p. 376; already quoted on p. 178 of this volume.

¹ The suggestion that there was an actual "bargain" has been questioned, but Professor Dunning's statement seems fully to justify the wording of the text. See pp. 338, 339, 341, of "Reconstruction, Political and Economic," by W. A. Dunning, already quoted.

of despotism as Reconstruction had attempted, such abuses and exploitations, were against the common peace and the general stability. They possessed no inward coherence. They were based upon no foundations of need. They were involved, externally and politically, in no enduring or tolerable social situation to which they were really contributory or by which they could be permanently sustained. They were without an actual being or potency, for they lacked the securities of order: labor despised them because they promised everything, and capital forsook them because they could really promise nothing. That they had a name and a place upon the earth was solely due to the external support of a public state of mind, — a state of mind which the instinct for liberty had created and which the same instinct for liberty would now as ruthlessly destroy.

II

The deliverance of the South from the disabilities which had been imposed upon her, the restoration of our local governments into the keeping of the local conscience, was thus no mere achievement of an artificial transaction between parties or sections: it was an achievement of profounder forces. Such forces may indeed have gained expression through the incidents of a local struggle or in the terms of a political "adjustment"; yet these were at last but outward and subordinate phases of one of the most characteristic movements of the modern world, — a movement which, in conformity with the spirit of science and in response to the spirit of democracy, is slowly sub-

jecting every policy of arbitrary repression or of artificial constraint to the double test of reality upon the one hand, and of freedom upon the other. Our disabilities — the older forms of our coercion — were overthrown by the very force and genius of our age.

Out of the conditions of that coercion the South emerged with her right to re-create her fortunes universally conceded. Her bonds were broken. Emancipation was to be given its broader meaning. There might be threats of "force bills," there might be incidental political aggravations. Yet no one has since dreamed that there could be again attempted the destruction of the local basis of our local administrations. As the South took up the task of rehabilitation, she began her work in the light of the approving and rejoicing interest of the well-meaning, the right-minded, of every latitude. She issued from her period of humiliations bearing in her hands — as "a charter of consent" — the tokens of sympathetic and approving expectation from those at home and abroad, from old enemies and older friends. At the North there was still some suspicion, and still a little hate, but these were the passions of the few. The stronger forces — both numerically and intellectually — were glad that our State governments had been restored to the governed, and that democratic institutions were to be put upon a democratic basis. They were not oblivious of the evils which still existed, many — as in the case of Mr. Schurz himself — sometimes used language about the South which contributed to give to generous policies an ungenerous significance; and yet they clearly saw that not until local control should be given its freer play

could there come about that local correction of local evils which is the only ultimate basis of social health. Their exasperations were but the residual flash of old and dying animosities. The new heart in them was the heart of hope for the South and of confidence in Southern men. Viewed thus in that larger and more comprehensive sense in which any social attitude must be interpreted, it is not inaccurate to declare that the North, in abandoning the policies of Reconstruction, abandoned them with an honest loathing for their abuses and with an honest impulse to advance the fuller autonomy of the Southern States.

The response of the South has been more spontaneous and more general than the most sanguine could have predicted. The personal and social fusion of the forces of one section with the forces of the other, the merging of their industrial fortunes, the tendency of Southern manufacturing interests to find a common ground with the dominant political party of the North, and the tendency of Northern municipalities to find common ground with the dominant political party of the South, the settling of the West by the representatives of both, the proving — through the Spanish war — of a common loyalty, the recognition — upon the assassinations of Garfield and McKinley — of a common sorrow, and the sharing through men like Waring and Gorgas, and St. Gaudens and Lanier, of a common science and a common art, have built up a nationality of spirit which in its unity and efficiency is even stronger than the old. The South is "at home" within the land. The fact is so obvious that its very assertion carries almost the note of affectation. It is true not merely

because of the reality of our kinship with the older past — the past in which our forefathers created the unity our fathers could not destroy — but because the South is at home within the future, within the region of our destiny and in the waiting province of the highest things which this nation can conceive of personal and social freedom. There too she dwells; she, in her soul, has no dream nor notion nor imagination except of a democratic state. Of all the sections of this country the serious, responsible South is the least likely, in the projection of its institutional future, to plan a place for a slave; for this is the only section which has really tried both philosophies of labor. There are some mistakes which peoples do not repeat. The societies which are most securely free are those which have found that a security attained through freedom — and therefore a security which every man is interested to protect — is not merely the better way but the only way.

And yet freedom has its inconveniences. It has — especially as a social condition — its testing points, its anti-climaxes, its weird confusions, its strange self-stultifications. You feel them in New York City when the vote of an Assembly-District of educated men, with large property-holdings, of long residence and tried experience, is offset by the vote of another in which the interests of the state are represented by an extemporized constituency of twenty languages, little property, and less intelligence. Yet the North's increasing consciousness of the ignorant in its own electorate has but added to the general appreciation of our Southern difficulties, and has to that extent

contributed to the unification of the national temper. While the presence at the South of a disproportionate fraction of weakness and ignorance in our body social has had a tendency to contribute to our isolation, the very problem of its mass — the sheer weight of the social burden — has deepened and broadened the interest and comprehension of the country as a whole, and has involved a franker and freer acceptance of our initiative. Despite the mutterings and threatenings of the few, despite a few capacious but really unimportant intrusions of the federal authority, the South since 1876 has been given a "free hand."

III

Yet not for an hour has the South been conscious of peace. The sense of uneasiness has been perennial. We know that the old coercion is ended; yet the consciousness of pressure is almost all-pervasive. There is a mind of uneasiness within our general life. The scent for aggression is acute, and the defensive habit is persistent.

Such a feeling of social strain is due partly to the vivid memory of old abuses, partly to the skill with which these abuses have been recalled, for partisan purposes, by the cheap threatenings of an occasional spokesman of the North and by the answering tumult of some protagonist of the South. Our uneasiness is also the result of a sense of social responsibility wrought upon by the presence of abnormal difficulties at home, and by the occasional sting of sincere but indiscriminating censure from without. Nor is this all. It is the

result of other and less conspicuous aspects of our fate as "a section" and as a people. Yet the deeper source of our disquietude lies, I think, in none of these. They are not — as disturbing influences — sufficiently general or sufficiently powerful to explain a social state of mind so inclusive and so persistent. The absence of any general public interest at the North in the moral petulance with which its narrower journalism has sometimes assailed the South, has long been evident. The political attacks of partisanship at the North and the recurrent "defences" of partisanship at the South have had little direct significance. While indirectly their effect has been serious as an irritant, providing a repeated "suggestion" for the states of social self-hypnosis in which at times our population has become involved, yet — unrelated to other forces — their continued influence would have been impossible. Their sources of power lie, as we shall see, rather in the moral psychology of our situation than in any serious fear of one political party or in any serious delusions as to the other. Nor does the source of our sense of disturbance lie in the mere magnitude of our task. In one sense, its quantitative proportions, the very weight and nature of its burden, have really proven — as we have already noted — one of the strongest factors of our security; they have drawn into the enlarging autonomy of the South the sympathetic coöperation and the broader self-interest both of the North and of the world.

What, then, is the force of our disquietude? For the instinct of uneasiness has its basis. The popular consciousness of pressure from without, the sense of a

new coercion, is not unfounded. Our popular leaders are prone to find it in some external enactment like the Fifteenth Amendment to the Constitution, or in some Northern expression of feverish solicitude for the integrity of the Eighth Commandment, or in some poignant outcry or sickening crime of the weaker race: and these leaders strike back; we are all tempted to strike back. And yet, whether or not we do so, the old disquietude returns; the old sense of pressure, the grip and force of the new coercion, close us in; and we remain apart, apart from the comparative assurance, the common peace of our national household. We know it. Despite the emancipating approval of the world, ours is still a heritage of constraint; — and we are not untroubled or unmoved.

Yet is not this very community of freedom into which the world invites us the source of our new coercion? Is not its hospitality — the intimate and universal invitation of its ideals, its democratic tendencies, its industrial and political assumptions — the real challenge to every provincial aspect of our development?

The external conditions of that development have been unusual. No population of a modern state could well have been involved in processes of adjustment and of readjustment more directly calculated to detach them from the general movement of democracy. Involved in an economic situation which naturally brought their social temper as well as their intellectual activity to the defence of slavery, forced to abandon the institution not by processes of persuasion but by a physical constraint which found its natural reaction in sympathetic interpretations of the departing order,

surrounded by emancipated multitudes whose weaknesses obscured the benefits of freedom, and overwhelmed by victors whose exploitations obscured the motives of emancipation, the people of the South have been permitted no untrammelled course into the provinces of democratic feeling. In the very presence of the undeveloped masses of another race — so different in type and circumstance — we have had at each moment of our social development and at each point in our institutional history a powerful challenge to every democratic instinct, and an insidious invitation to modify through artificial provisions that common democratic basis to which the North itself is by no means perfectly adjusted. Thus in her forces of population as well as in the influences of her history, the South finds herself confronted by formidable, I had almost said irreducible, factors of social differentiation. The things that make a people "different" abound within her. Her whole environment is, in a sense, a school of eccentricity, of detachment, of isolation.

The contact and challenge of our modern age to a society involved in such conditions will set up within its dominant population two distinct sets or tendencies of reaction. It is inevitable that one of these reactions should be resistive. A challenge from without will be answered by a responsive challenge from within. Opposition will develop opposition — the return and recoil of our life upon itself. It will be general and instinctive. The forces of rejection, of antagonism, of passionate segregation, will possess a profound and general power. An acute and exaggerated conscious-

ness of section and of race will be inevitable. Instead of passing away with the increasing sweep of the challenge from without, it will become the more intense. Its standpoint will be popular, will appeal therefore to the self-interest of a local political leadership, which, in turn, will commend its necessity, exalt its dignity, and attempt its institutional expression.

IV

Responding to these impulses of popular reaction, each merely sectional agency — in our politics, our journalism, or our education — becomes, in turn, such an energy of reënforcement to all the processes thus inaugurated that the force of detachment would become supreme but for the corrective power of another tendency. The force of attachment and inclusion is also operative. It may not always lie upon the surface. Those who at the shore-line watch the drive and direction of an ocean's storm may forget (to use a familiar illustration) that there are deeper, stronger powers than wind and wave; that beneath the tumult and fury of the storm the pull of the tide, unnoted but resistless, is moving the vaster volume of the sea. Within the South the force and sweep of our turmoil are realities; no wise observer will jauntily predict their termination or build upon the assumption of their inconsequence. But deep as the force of gravity and resistless as the equilibrium of our stellar magnitudes, the responsive reaction of our nationality, the moral and economic forces of association and fraternity, are drawing the South into the context and community of the world.

Just because this movement which enfolds us is free, is itself a horizon rather than a dynamic, its cogency is the more pervasive and irresistible. It is not a propaganda, but an invitation: it is an opportunity; a vast and befriending hospitality. Many forces will react against it, but the deeper forces will react toward it. For the very reason that it offers no acute aggressions, the sway of its attraction is supreme. Because this new coercion does not — in the usual sense — coerce, its power is the more persistent, and the ultimate and liberal scope of its persuasion is the more decisive. It is not a mere abstraction; it descends not to one particular but to all. It touches not only every isolated locality, but every temper of isolation with an impalpable but dissolving power; for this movement of unification and inclusion, this force of national incorporation — drawing into itself the detached interests and the self-separating provinces of our American life — is in fact the real education borne upon every page of every newspaper, the final influence of every schoolhouse, the gain acquired in every transaction of our broadening commerce, the ultimate harvest of every farmer who sows for a national market and of every laborer matched and disciplined in the school of an international competition. We live, moreover, by the exchanges of thought as well as by the exchanges of trade. To stand outside the world is intolerable and impossible. Yet to be admitted is to admit; for the commerce of ideas, of intellectual and social influence, is impossible through erected barriers and unopening doors.

Our new coercion is indeed but the myriad force of

every agency and instrument of our modern world, a world everywhere drawing peoples from their detachment, races from their isolation, governments from their provincialism, societies from peculiar traditions and estranging faiths. We may draw about ourselves the tense protections of our "peculiarity," the boundaries of our intellectual or political segregation. In so far as that which we would preserve is the subtle quality of our individuality of spirit, the movement which enfolds us will give it depth, richness, poise. But in so far as we attempt to seek the basis of our detachment within the institutions, the laws, the literature which must always form the common terms of our relationship with other sections and peoples (through which they must deal with us and through which we must deal with them), the deeper movement of our own genius will correct us, and will become — in response to the expectation of the world — a movement of catholicity and accord. For the agencies of its expectation, as the world draws us within itself, — the instruments of its appeal, — lie not in particulars alone, but in those ceaseless assumptions under which it claims our kinship with itself. We cannot escape them. They deal with us as with the people not of the eighteenth century, but of the twentieth; as with men speaking the same language, responsive to the same ideals, answerable to the same laws, moved by like motives, destroyed by the evils and quickened and enriched by the blessings that are visitant wherever the thought of God has a practical reality and conscience a social significance. To reorganize our life outside of the whole congeries of institutions and assumptions

in which our age has involved us is as unthinkable as to reorganize ourselves outside of the laws which express the conservation of energy or the force of gravity. Even to violate them is to call them into play; to oppose them is but to affirm them.

We will therefore deal with our problems — tragic and excessive as they are — not merely as a modern people, but in conformity with the modern spirit, — a somewhat different thing. To talk, in an age like ours, of not educating any particular class of human beings or of deliberately holding any fraction or race of men at a permanently lower level of industrial or political opportunity is to talk a language as stale — and as pathetic — as that of the complacent memorial upon the coffin of an Egyptian mummy. We are not bound to assume equalities which do not exist, but we cannot arbitrarily fix the status of inequality from without. The thing cannot be done. It cannot be done except in the terms of general law and in the forms of our common institutions. So to adjust and revamp our general laws as to make them the expression and instrument of arbitrary classifications is to habituate them to artificial discriminations and to re-create them upon an undemocratic basis. A discrimination put into the law is a discriminatory law; a discriminating law, in a democratic society, is not a law, but a revision of the law at the command of the minority. That which may have been so rewritten and reaffirmed is not the limitation of a particular class, but the limitation of the universal basis upon which, and within which, the inter-relations of all men have been established and expressed.

The essential issue is not the negro at all. He is comparatively of little significance except as the humble occasion and instrument of the processes through which the South is defining and establishing her conceptions of society and is determining her relations to the country at large, to the world, and to democracy. The fundamental issue is not what we will do with the negro, but what we — with the negro as the incident or provocation of our readjustments — will do with our institutions. With the negro — and with the historic, political, and industrial associations which he involves — as its basis, the resistive reaction to which I have referred may draw the South, in its recoil from the pressure of a democratic age, more and more within itself, may intensify its separateness and its isolation, may provincialize its mind, may harden and confirm its life within the closer and more persistent forms of a merely sectional development. Or the life of the South, responding — as I believe to be inevitable — to the inward forces of a reaction which shall be not negative but affirmative, will enter into ever larger and closer relations with the strong and advancing spirit of our country and our generation.

The recognition of the rights—civil, political, industrial—of the negro race, need involve no invasion of our social autonomy or our race integrity; our “social” segregation need involve no invasion of the negro’s political or civil rights. The South will realize that, as it seeks to move forward through the forms of its own free self-determination, its rejection of the principle of free self-determination in the development of any subordinate group may establish those legal precedents of

discrimination and may set to work within the world those broader popular revulsions under which its own liberties may be redefined. That such contingencies are improbable does not destroy the subtle pressure of the social situation they suggest. Some of the profoundest forces of social life reside within things which do not happen and within circumstances which cannot arise. In the sensitive psychology of human aggregates there is a conscience toward the impossible which is perhaps unneeded as a constraint, but which, like the shadowy intimations of a religion beyond duty, keeps the pathway clearer. For, turning to the positive aspect of the contention, it is at least obvious — obvious as a circumstance which is ever arising and as a force which is ever operating — that in so far as we shall choose as the forms of our own free self-determination those and only those which involve the free self-determination of our included groups, the free activity of each must advance and fulfil our own. Within the very life of each, the choosing and fulfilling of its liberty instinctively becomes the choosing and affirming of our development as the security and theatre of its growth. No true freedom can retard our freedom. Every liberated capacity must contribute both its capacity and its liberty to ours.

V

Such a policy, moreover, will draw into the processes of our self-development the forces that are without as well as the forces that are within. It will represent the answer of hospitality to hospitality. The humanizing and democratizing forces of our age may

through such a policy find within us the forms of their proper movement, the unobstructed channels of their accomplishment. Their streams, as we thus direct them, will flow naturally within our own, — turning the mill-wheels of our social commerce. This is the lesson of all science. Out of adaptation comes our conquest. Why be thwarted and divided by the waters, when they may be made to unite us, — or delayed by currents which may advance us? Why oppose ourselves to tendencies and forces of our time which, admitted within the processes of our development, will serve our well-being and advance our happiness? The powers of that new coercion which some would persuade us to distrust, may be accepted and transmitted within our progress as new and kindly energies of welfare. The influences from without may give us service. Our life, put into full accord with the moving and determining principles of our age, will find in their contact not a force of upheaval — a damaging contagion of alarm — but a source of control and steadiness. A new sense of security, a new consciousness of truth and peace, comes to those who stand against the background of the actual world and the immediate hour, within the flow and context of universal forces, asking no benefits of artifice, but rightful claimants upon the coöperation of the common stars and the universal will. Every man who asks an arbitrary or unnatural favor surrenders something of his birthright; for the birthright of every genuine social factor is not “immunity,” but the tonic power of the fair chance, — is not “privilege,” but democracy.

In our departure from our detachment and our isolation we but withdraw ourselves from a false centre and occupy — within a full horizon — the real centre at which the powers of our age converge. All that men are doing becomes now of advantage to us. We not only can “get the news” more perfectly, but we are at the operative, effective point of distribution for ideas, for labor, for wealth, for culture, — yes, for righteousness; for the discipline of life as well as its quality is deepened by its more varied contacts. All that is of service anywhere serves us. All that is truly believed anywhere, delivers us, — whether that faith be economic, or political, or religious. Ours is a great task, but within the harness of this task we thus put the very world to work.

The distinctive genius of any age, its spirit, its ascendant impulse, is perhaps the mightiest social asset available in the development of classes and peoples. In a period, like our own, of general and efficient communications, its power is the more significant. It is the waiting reservoir, the dynamic heritage of every political or social group. Its operation is so bewildering in its energy and complexity that its very existence is at times forgotten; but the peoples who use it, who are wise enough to put it to work for them and within them, must prevail. To accept its service is not necessarily to accept its evils. To admit its coöperations is not blindly to surrender to its perversities. In some respects its teaching is not admirable, and in certain other respects its practice is less admirable than its teaching. And yet the power with which to fight the evil of this age does not lie in some virtue

of an age departed, but in some higher power of this, — in some relevant and effectual truth of our own abundant moment. The armory is full. The weapons are given into our hands. To take the part of our age against its evils is to serve our age as well as to serve our country; but to reject the gift of the finer uses of our generation, to shut out those deeper forces which give to our time its distinctive character, is to serve neither our country nor our age, — is to deprive the South of that accumulated and collective energy of accomplishment which is the heritage of every modern state. To throw such power away is to be immeasurably poorer, wisely to accept it is to be measurably stronger.

Nor need we fear that when fully accepted within our life and directly at work within our growth it will destroy the strong in the interest of the weak, — that it will fulfil every prophecy made by every Abolitionist in its name, or make valid every deduction from its postulates that the morbid have suggested. For its canons are those both of democracy and of science, of reality as well as freedom. That instinct for liberty which is working within the social energy of our period is tense — as answering to the nerve of its self-control — with the sense of truth. Of the far future we cannot predict. We do not and cannot see. We can only observe, and think, and take counsel one of another as to a way strangely difficult and dark. But it would seem as safe to trust the power of truth, of the sheer actuality of the forces that lie within our scene, as to trust the policies of freedom. A civilization which in this age cannot commit itself into the hands of the truth and into

the keeping of liberty, without attempting "private arrangements" in behalf of its institutions, contains no peril so great as its own self-doubting heart. "Things are what they are and the consequences of them will be what they will be; why then should we desire to be deceived?"¹

That the deeper spirit of the South, responding to the forces that encompass us, will accept the processes of reality and liberty as processes of its own development, I do not doubt. Consciously — and in large part unconsciously — it has done so. Its instinctive nationality is sound. Its loyalty to the country and to our time is genuine. The vitality and scope of its affirmative reaction, under the touch of the new coercion which enfolds it, must be measured not by the standard of a conceivable abstract attainment, but in the light of its history and its conditions. For its difficulties are real and the internal grounds of its negative reaction will long persist. To recognize them is not to despair. To underestimate them will contribute neither to their reduction nor to their postponement. To attempt to see them clearly, to measure adequately the principles which move within them, and the ends to which they minister, may itself contribute to the correction of the detachment and isolation they invite.

Conscious of the contact of its age, the popular mind of the South — seeking relief from its unquiet — will strike again and again, and sometimes with success, at this or that fancied occasion of disturbance. It

¹ Quoted from Bishop Butler, by Matthew Arnold, in "Last Essays on Church and Religion," p. 304.

will give much sympathy to this or that attack upon some justly offending conception of the negro or upon some phrase or section of the national Constitution. Such impulses, however mistaken, cannot be answered by a misconception of their earnestness or by a misstatement of their motive. They are sometimes used, indeed, — as are all popular impulses, — by unworthy men for selfish ends. But the forces which they represent are part of the legitimate psychology of our situation — as inevitable and as intelligible as any of the social reactions of our period. Their corrective will be chiefly found not in any explicit criticism or direct attack so much as in that other reaction, that affirmative response to the larger horizon of our affairs, upon which I have dwelt so fully. It is under the instruction of its tendencies that the popular mind will at length perceive the full significance of the forces in which we are involved. It is this positive and affirmative reaction which will at length draw our public opinion within the sway of the conviction that to end the instrument of our unrest the South must needs repeal (if she would dwell apart) not this or that clause of a formal Constitution, but the very genius and quality of her time; that such clauses are but symbols of a deeper agency; that this agency is the age itself — with its imperious conceptions and its exhaustless capacity for their distribution; that these powers are effective not because their only sources are without, but because their seat is also here within, — the South herself in her deeper nature and her more intimate desire being quick with the sense of nationality and humanity.

The old coercion which was ended by the instinct of liberty in the world has been succeeded by the new, — the new, which, as the scene changes, is now that same liberty's coercive form. Every moment is its instrument. Every phase of progress is its minister. Every invention of mechanics or discovery of science is an article of its irresistible conspiracy. Through every fugitive journal or published book, every railroad or telegraph, every exchange of commerce or ideas, every national or international debate, it is ending the isolation and the detachment of social groups and is impelling their reorganization within its larger and freer unity. The forces of this coercion have, as they touch the South, no partial or discriminating interest in any weaker or included group, save as we ourselves may make such a group (or our adjustment to such a group) the point at which the free and normal movements of democracy and equity are confounded or arrested. They can challenge us through any weaker race only in the event that we, through it, array ourselves against the order of the world. They are not peculiarly concerned with such a race (nor, let us remember, in any partial or arbitrary sense with us), but with the free coursing through free channels of the total beneficence of their currents to the fertilization and enrichment of mankind.

Because they are impartial, because they ask not and give not by private contract, but upon the common terms (terms which therefore every force of nature and of society will instinctively protect) they are imperious. To oppose ourselves to them is to receive them into ourselves not as powers of our normal development, but

as powers of limitation, maladjustment, and distortion. But to receive them with an answering hospitality, to accept them within our life as proper forces of our development and our happiness, is to unite them to our tasks and to bind them within our progress as the forces of a resistless coöperation; the things that we do will be done well — as by the labor of the common will; and the hopes we hold will bear and upbear the seal of the world — the community of its patience and the authority of its mood.

ASCENDANCY

CHAPTER XI

ASCENDANCY

I

THE true ascendancy of any social group, at this or that period of its history, is primarily determined — in the more vital sense — with reference to the former states or levels of its own life, rather than with reference to groups outside itself. One star may be actually lower than another, yet if its progress (as compared with each of its preceding moments) be upward rather than downward, it may be regarded as ascendant ; ascendant not in relation to other stars, but in relation to the former levels of its own advance.

A star in the western sky may, moreover, be actually higher than a star in the eastern, and may therefore be said to possess a relative ascendancy as compared with its eastern comrade. But this actual relative ascendancy may (from the immediate standpoint of the observer) be unconvincing, — for the western star, though at the higher altitude, may be declining, and the eastern star, though at the lower altitude, may be slowly rising — passing its former levels and ascendant over its older limits.

The illustration is but partially applicable to the phenomena of collective growth, and yet it may serve to suggest a vital though a somewhat neglected sense in which the ascendancy of social groups may be considered. For the fact of deepest significance in refer-

ence to every human aggregate is the relative status of its development as compared with the former states or stages of its own advance; it is this test which indicates its growth or its decline. Here necessarily is the real basis of the distinction between an advancing and a decaying group, between decadent and ascendant peoples. The national or social aggregate which is slowly slipping below the levels of its former life, which is so using the capital of its moral and economic forces as to be consuming more than it is producing, is not in the organic sense entitled to the deeper distinctions of ascendancy. While its relative position — as contrasted with other aggregates — may be incidentally superior, it is in fact a declining power — representative of excellences which possess only a residual dominion, and carrying within its own life the now prevailing forces of debility and decay.

This does not suggest that a great but decadent people may not be for generations — even for centuries — relatively nobler and stronger than a people weaker but progressive. Yet it does, I think, suggest that with every national or social group, however great, the question of supreme concern — as it considers its own fertility, efficiency, and happiness — is not the much mooted question as to whether or not it is superior to some other nation or group, but the question as to whether its own experience — as contrasted with the levels of its former progress — is fairly representative of an ascendant life. With every organic structure, personal or social, the health and soundness of the life itself is thus the primary basis of its ascendancy. It is doubtless interesting and profitable to compare our

civilization with the civilization of Japan; it is, however, equally interesting and even more profitable that we should compare our own present civilization with its past, that we should measure by this test its vital soundness as well as its versatility and wealth, and that, thereupon, we should contribute what we may to those popular capacities for clear thinking and right feeling which must largely constitute the forces of our self-correction. This is not to admit the thought of failure or decay. It is but to emphasize the thought that so long as our positive ascendancy is secure, our relative ascendancy — as contrasted with other peoples — need not primarily concern us, and that when our positive ascendancy is gone, and our star declines upon its descending pathway, no concern, however serious, can give to our relative ascendancy the significance and the distinction we would crave. To prevail will have little meaning when we have ceased to prevail against ourselves.

II

And yet, inasmuch as the precise parity of social groups is practically unthinkable, some groups being actually stronger or weaker than other groups, it is inevitable that the question of the relative ascendancy of one nation or section or race, as contrasted with other nations or sections or races, should persistently recur. Not that the issue in its totality can in every case be finally determined. For a particular group which may, in some respects, be stronger than all the groups with which it is contrasted, may, in other respects,

be relatively weaker. One nation may be ascendant in reference to one range of qualities or one species of wealth, yet in reference to other standards of production or other phases of efficiency it may be immeasurably inferior. The question must be answered, moreover, in relation to the varied forms of social strain to which peoples are subjected, and in relation to the conditions and the environment of the specific age in which the contrasted groups must play their part. Certain forms of social attainment may indeed be extremely difficult, may illustrate fine and rare powers of artistic enthusiasm or collective industry, yet they may be — in the actual context of our present struggle — so irrelevant as to represent no important capacity for success. Other qualities of other groups may be so aptly and definitely “timed for the race,” so overwhelmingly and directly “practical,” so strung and tuned with the sense of the immediate industrial or physical encounter, as to promise much for the earlier periods of the struggle, but to promise little for those longer and severer stages which test the factor of reserve, the resources of their self-control, the slow wisdom of their moral steadiness and their spiritual patience. Ascendancy at one point may not involve ascendancy at others. The problem — as with almost all social problems — possesses its complexities and confusions. And yet to be ascendant in relation to other groups — ascendant not *over* them but among them — is, to some appreciable degree, one of the most elementary and persistent of our social passions.

Not infrequently, however, the pursuit of ascendancy, because conceived in false and destructive terms,

has itself involved the embarrassment if not the decadence of the aspiring group. It would be interesting to inquire to what extent the policies upon which modern Spain depended for her relative advantage, resulted in her poverty, how far the cultural isolation of ancient Greece contributed to her decay, and to what extent the military preoccupations of the Empire resulted in the decline of Roman life and the ultimate deterioration of the Roman state. And yet we may not forget that, in some of its forms, the struggle for ascendancy has often seemed to be but a phase of the struggle for existence, peoples like individuals being sometimes so sharply confronted with the challenge of opposition that they have been forced to answer to the alternative "prevail or die." Rightly, therefore, to divide the issues of ascendancy, to claim without encroachment and to prevail without oppression, — to choose and to pursue only those courses which are the pathways of a righteous self-expression, to reject the constricting and narrowing forms of false advantage, and to attain to true power and to the horizons of a real and serviceable eminence — this is the problem again and again presented to national and social groups.

Within the life of our Southern States the problem has assumed at least two forms. The representative people of the South have been conscious of a double task, the task of maintaining their general ascendancy in relation to the included group comprising the negro population, and the task of maintaining their political ascendancy as a section and as a people in relation to the other sections of the United States. The latter aspect of our aspiration now seems so sadly and impossibly

remote that we are sometimes tempted to forget those deeper ambitions for a national leadership which swayed the generations immediately preceding our Civil War. The leadership and the prestige of Washington, Jefferson, Monroe, James Madison, Patrick Henry, Chief Justice Marshall, established a general and effectual body of political influence, a cumulative political tradition, which made the South preëminent if not paramount in the earlier institutional development of our country. That glory has departed, and the South now sits in our national councils clothed in but the sorriest measure of her old and honored state.¹

¹“I speak to you in the intimate intonations of our unfulfilled ambition. For we have an unfulfilled ambition that has given a deep seriousness to our lives. Of course, I do not speak of personal disappointments. . . . We claim a larger ambition and a higher patriotism than this. What I speak of is an unfulfilled ambition for our country — an ambition for these States and these people as a part of the Union. The ambition that men felt in the time of Washington, of Jefferson, of Marshall — this is what I mean. They and their fellows wrought out their high wish. Our wish, equally high, we have not wrought out; — and that is our sorrow. How has the South fallen in the life, in the thought, in the conduct of the Republic, since their time! If we have not been disinherited, we are yet almost strangers in the house of our fathers. Why are we not, why may we not become, leaders in our country’s progress?” — From an address by Walter H. Page, of North Carolina, at the Conference for Education in the South, Birmingham, Ala., April 27, 1904; Report of the Proceedings, p. 99.

Yet in the view, sometimes suggested, that the South will find this serious accession of political influence in the merely external division of her party support, I cannot concur. I see no large or wholesome political liberation or political development in the States like Kentucky, Maryland, and Missouri, where close party divisions have been effected. Serious political influence will be dependent upon deeper forces and on more far-reaching conditions than the mere fact of “voting for the other party,” — especially among those who have

There are many explanations of her decline; there are many theories as to the essential secret of her restoration; and yet the present facts touch us with a melancholy not wholly lost in the stirring sense of our new achievements and our brighter future. A crude numerical supremacy would do no one any good. A hard and coercive ascendancy, based upon a mere count of heads, on the clever perpetuation of some mechanical or tactical advantage, or on some shrewd association of selfish interests, would involve no true renewal of our political or social power. But a free ascendancy, based upon capacities for leadership which the nation might accept as indispensable to her welfare, — an ascendancy of service rather than an ascendancy of force, — would involve both the return of our prestige and the renewal of all the deeper and happier springs of our confidence and pride.

Such, after all, is the only form or phase of ascendancy which really matters, or which — in a democracy — can have any true security or ultimate significance. The only way in which we can become strong within the nation is to become really necessary to its life. When — in the soundness and health of our industrial

been inclined to the opinion that (at the South) the Democratic party — as contrasted with the local Republican organization — has not been right because it has been numerous, but has been numerous because, in spite of its many blunders, it has upon the whole been right. That this party precedence is now to be subjected to the tests of a wiser Republican appeal and a higher party competition must have its wholesome influence. With the party questions involved I am to deal more fully, however, in the volume, "Issues, Southern and National." In the present chapter I am concerned with conditions that seem to me to be more fundamental than those of our immediate party politics.

development, in the fertility and efficacy of our ideas, in the higher sagacity and the personal devotion of our political leadership — we have that to contribute which our country can find with us but which it cannot or does not so fully find elsewhere, its powers will once more quicken our hands and our hands will again execute its larger tasks. The agricultural ascendancy of the middle West is free, is not artificially wrested from anybody, but actually bestowed by the suffrages of those who buy its grain, — who buy it because they have learned that the consummate capacities which have given themselves to the problems of its growth and its transportation have proven their indispensable and peculiar fitness for the feeding of the world. The mercantile and banking ascendancy of New York is not secured by trick or artifice or negotiation; it is bestowed and conferred by those who trade. Tricks have been used in its behalf (and always to its eventual injury), but the only real basis of its ascendancy lies in its essential service — its proved and indispensable utility — to the commercial and industrial interests of the United States. The recent political ascendancy of the North (I make no exclusive reference to any particular political party) has been largely due to the fact that the North, not being overburdened by the preoccupations of such a local issue as the negro has presented, has been freer to deal with national issues, freer to develop capacities for national and international administration, and has therefore ruled not only through the larger masses of her population, but through the larger range of her experience. Our common necessities have yielded the suffrages of her support.

The ascendancy — as a whole — of any particular section in relation to other sections may not recur. It is perhaps better that it should not. For each section, however, through the training of its special capacities in the field of its special experience, to represent some particular phase of ascendancy within the common councils of the country, would contribute to a sectional "balance of power" and to a broader sense of participation which would deepen and enrich the consciousness of our unity as a people. As each section or quarter of our country finds an ascendancy of service based upon its peculiar capacities and opportunities, and expressed through its indisputable relation to the national welfare, its position of eminence and honor need not be self-proclaimed,—it will be bestowed; and its federate and authoritative relation to the common life will be instinctively acknowledged. Has the South a field of experience peculiarly her own? Has the South, therefore, a peculiar opportunity for the development of distinctive capacities and for the contribution of an indispensable service? Has she a training ground for forms of statesmanship of which this country in its national progress and in its international relations has especial need? Has she a chance to do things which no other section has quite the chance to do so well? And is there for her — in the special capacities and the eminent success through which she may perform her immediate task — a possible opportunity to regain her place of influence in relation to other and more varied issues of our national development?

III

As one looks broadly to-day over the scene of national enterprises and of international policy, one can hardly fail to note two general and conspicuous movements in the development of contemporary peoples. The first is a movement of comprehension and inclusion. The large political aggregates are growing larger. The small are disappearing or growing smaller. The phase of this tendency which, for the South, has an especial interest, is that the isolation of weaker groups is being broken up, and the "inferior" peoples are being everywhere included and reorganized within the life of stronger aggregates. The weaker lands are not being let alone; they are not being separated unto their own boundaries and delivered to their own people.

Into the ultimate causes of such a movement I do not here inquire; I now enter into no discussion of its policy or its ethics. It is with the fact that I would deal, the broad outstanding fact that (for example) almost every man has a government in Africa except the African, and that all round the world the weaker groups and the backward peoples are being included within the limits and policies of the stronger. The one rejected policy is the policy of political segregation; the one prevalent policy is the policy of inclusion. Where political segregation persists and the movement for inclusion has been halted, the result is due not to political disinclination, but to strategic defeat. Diplomacy has not yet solved the problem of "ways and means." Its plans may have been thwarted, — yet not by popular rejection at home nor by the effectual

protest of the weaker group, but rather by another nation and a competitive diplomacy. Its policy of encroachment has been checked only by another of the "leading nations," representing the same policy, eager for the same "burden," ready for the same administrative "inclusion."

In addition, however, to this movement toward the inclusion and comprehension of populations, there is also proceeding — strangely enough — a movement toward the broader distribution of power. The movement of empire is coincident with a movement toward democracy. The two movements are not always found within the same territory, but they overlap at many points and each is as characteristic of our period as the other. Just how far the one is related to the other it would be difficult to say. Perhaps (aside from any question of individual or local rights) the very size of the huge political aggregates which the movement of inclusion is creating, has impelled the extension and development of the local basis of control. Perhaps, after all, in the interest of the efficiency of federal tendencies it has become advisable to rescue the administrative organization from unwieldiness and inflexibility by an ever broadening distribution of the centres of interest and power. At any rate the fact is clear. The tendency of all self-conscious political groups is essentially in the direction of a larger popular control. Great Britain, Germany, France are emphasizing the importance of their colonial units; in Germany the socialist organization now represents a vote of more than 3,000,000 and is numerically the first political party of the Empire; the struggle for imperial representation

in the Russias is not more significant than the previous possession of numberless local rights which have not been so generally reported; to India and South Africa are yielded each year a more varied representative authority; Bulgaria is free; concessions to the democratic movement are made even by the Sultan at Constantinople; and, beyond the Caucasus and the Euphrates, Persia itself is upon the eve of a Constitution. I would exaggerate the scope of none of these developments. That they have always meant what, to the average American mind, they naturally suggest, I would be the last to declare. Yet they represent a tendency, and a tendency in one direction. In the other direction, be it noted, in the direction of the fundamental reversal of the democratic movement, there is no conscious tendency anywhere.

We are confronted therefore by two significant developments in our immediate history. First, there is the tendency toward inclusion, the movement of empire, the gradual incorporation of the weaker races and groups within the administrative federation of the stronger. Secondly, there is the movement of democracy, the tendency toward the broader distribution of the units of control. The stronger peoples are drawing into closer and closer relations with the weaker, and yet the terms under which these relations are established and expressed are inevitably tinged and colored by the democratic assumptions to which modern society is increasingly committed. The movement of empire is indeed modifying certain of our older notions of democracy, correcting some of our doctrinaire conceptions as to the natural equality of men; but the movement of democracy is

modifying even more deeply some of our older notions of empire, is correcting the legal presumptions of inequality, is enforcing the conception of the equality of rights before the law, is impressing the fact of the social responsibility of the strong, is discouraging and slowly arresting the destructive policies of exploitation, and everywhere commending the redemptive and constructive policies of equity, order, and education. It is no easy problem, — this problem of the strong living with the weak (as the strong have resolved to do) and yet so living with them as to keep faith with those profounder interests of the weak which are also the interests of the strong, — so living as to assure peace without inflicting desolation, as to preserve order without defeating justice, as to upbuild a state which will express the life of its higher groups without enfeebling or destroying that waiting manhood of weaker peoples which itself craves and deserves expression.

We ourselves are finding this problem in Cuba, in Porto Rico, in Hawaii, in Panama, in the Philippines, just as England is finding it in the West Indies, in India, Africa, Australasia. In some respects, it presents just now for every modern government the supreme question of its national policy and its international relations. That England and Germany — that other nationalities as well — do not have to face it in its cold and literal forms, that they can govern without a written constitution, may seem to obscure or to postpone the sharper phases of the "contradiction," but it does not terminate the problem in its essence, nor change the essential elements of the administrative task. Temporarily, indeed, the task is immeasurably simpler:

through this or that period of wise and kindly tutelage the problem may appear to sleep; but this sleep is never that of oblivion or death. As between the tendencies of governmental absolutism and the tendencies of popular participation the latter are not the tendencies which are vanishing, or being outgrown, or being superseded by "more modern methods." There may be no written constitution, but the forces which antedate our constitutions, which they express and will outlive, are operative within the scenes and factors of every administrative situation. They are presented not merely by the instincts and interests of the included groups, but — even more persistently — by the instincts, interests, and preferences of the groups including them. The issue is always there. For the stronger race so to dwell with the weaker as to upbuild a common state upon the basis of the common welfare and expressive of the common happiness, may be called the distinctive task of a democratic imperialism or of an imperial democracy; yet it is — in either case — the supreme problem just now challenging the political capacity of modern peoples.

IV

Where, peculiarly, is the training ground — so far as our country is concerned — of such capacities? The task which day by day engages us in our Southern States is but the characteristic problem of the modern world. It confronts us in phases of peculiar difficulty, for each element of the problem is presented in clear and insistent forms. There is upon one hand the uncompromising reality of the negro, in his inexperience, his weakness,

his racial contrasts; there is, upon the other hand, the uncompromising reality of the Constitution, both in the force of its written obligations and in that deeper force which our own instincts, interests, and preferences have accorded it. We may quarrel with its details, but even after we had repealed them (should we do so) the operative force of its elementary assumptions — of our own social convictions and dispositions — would create the same problem and reimpose the same difficulties. All the essential issues presented by a stronger and a weaker race within the administrative household of a democratic state would still confront us. To repeal an irritation or an annoyance is not to abolish a situation or to remove an issue of life. We have to do with a situation and with an issue of life.

To face this problem as it engages us or as we are engaged by it, and to deal with it successfully, is to meet not only a necessity of our welfare but that special task through which we may best serve our country and our age. Not that these may rightly demand of us a neat and mechanical "solution," wrapped within the easy formulas of a political panacea. "The great problems of experience are never solved in any mathematical or final sense. They are solved only in the sense that life becomes adjusted to them, or in the sense that their conflicting or complementary elements find a working adjustment to one another, an adjustment consistent in larger and larger measure with wisdom, right, happiness; but always coincident with the possibility of misconception and with recurrent periods of acute antagonism. The issues of racial cleavage, like the issues of labor and capital, or of science and religion, yield to no pre-

cise formulas; they are issues of life, persistent and irreducible. And yet they are subject to approximate adjustments, increasingly righteous, intelligent, and effective, and yielding an increasing measure of social peace, of industrial coöperation, of individual freedom and happiness. It is only in this sense that the word solution is employed. Toward the establishment of such a working adjustment of the factors of any national problem, it is well to labor in order that the tasks of American life may become the occasions of a keener and more widely distributed sense of social obligation, a larger and saner political temper, a purer civic devotion, rather than the occasions of national demoralization." ¹

Such a progressive and approximate solution we may advance to further and larger stages of success. To do so will be to advance our institutions in their efficiency and our country in its promise. So to further these, so to play our part in reference to what is perhaps the supreme difficulty in our national experience, will advance the vitality of our own relation to its common welfare and the indispensable significance of our service to the world itself. This need not involve our exclusive absorption in a local issue. To accept it in its larger meaning, in the spirit of our fundamental institutions, is to transform it from a local issue into a national opportunity. To deal with it in a temper un-American and in terms repressive and provincial is to localize it and to be localized by it; but to accept it and to deal with it as the men of a practical and yet a democratic

¹ From the preface to the author's volume, "The Present South," p. ix.

age is to be employed, through it, at the very testing point of our modern spirit and of our national institutions. There is no strong political party which it does not embarrass and involve. There is therefore no national issue and no area within our national boundaries which it does not affect. We may dislike the task and may shrink from it, may much prefer to deal with the issues peculiar to other localities and peoples, but we cannot escape it; it is the problem which, in the phrase of the period, is "up to us."

What is the alternative? If we may make no demonstration of capacity by dealing with this question, may we do so by ignoring it? If we are to find for the South no distinction of leadership or eminence of service in the handling of our own task, are other and more general tasks likely to be committed to our keeping? If we fail, by bungling or preoccupation or neglect, in doing the thing that is at hand, — if we sulk at our own work, or weaken idly or petulantly beneath its strain, are our shoulders the more likely to feel the weight and honor of the general burden?

V

Much has been accomplished. And yet the period of time is so brief within which the South has been able to deal unobstructedly with the conditions, that it is inevitable that only the beginnings of an adjustment should appear. Nothing so tempts one to despair as to hear some distinguished publicist dwelling plaintively upon "the now extended trial" which has been accorded to this or that factor in the situation. So

short a perspective, a pessimism so premature, is an injustice both to the South and to the negro. It is superficial and unhistorical. Our whole case has suffered from few things so seriously as from that utter lack of social imagination (upon the part of many of the well meaning of both sections) which supposes that the vast and involved confusions, the different histories, the conflicting interests, the inevitable suspicions, the diverging social tendencies and political affiliations of two wholly contrasted races — thrown together within a fate which has seemed to make the rights of each a menace to the security of the other — could be composed within a couple of generations, and finally and complacently catalogued in some cheerful list of "Popular Misunderstandings Rectified." No; these issues run deep — through all the more recent soil of our adventures and our institutions — back into the very roots of nature. Their processes of adjustment must be those of growth, of slow approximation, of gradual but firm advance into a clearer appreciation of motives, a broader knowledge of life, and a more accurate understanding of *both* the persistent factors in the problem given us. There would be no problem if the negro were not a negro; there would be no problem if this age, and this country — which is its characteristic institutional expression — were not distinctively democratic.

It may be said that the South is not likely to forget the first, — that we, at least, are always likely to know that the negro is a negro. It is true: and yet it is also true that the South has sometimes forgotten (perhaps not unnaturally) that the rest of the country also knows it. The fact may be ignored or obscured by a few,

but the average multitudes of the North and of the modern world are as far from the notion that the negro is but a white man in a darker skin, as are the multitudes of the South from the notion that the negro is not a man at all. It is the privilege of each section, if it will have the magnanimity to do so, to judge the other not by the small eccentric remnant of its sentimentalists, but by the sober aggregate of its collective common sense. The world knows that the negro is a negro; the negro knows it, and rightly declines to deny it or abjure it. Any "solution" which ignores it would wrong the weak as well as the strong, for it would yield its inevitable fruit of disappointment and reaction. It is an element of the problem which no tendency or inclination of our age would have us to forget, but which its passion for reality (the age being, as we have seen, an age of science as well as an age of democracy) would command us to regard. To call the weak strong, to call the ignorant wise, to press the refinements of Horatian prosody upon those whose problem is bread, to repose government in the hands of those who can naturally have no instincts concerning it except to welcome it as a Santa Claus or to sell it as a bauble; ruthlessly to anticipate capacities in the untried at the expense of the experience, the interests, and the capacities of the tried — is to touch all the solid integrities of society, the assumptions and supports of its elementary transactions, with a vague and tottering madness. It is what the South will not do. And, what is just now of almost equal importance, it is what no one expects the South to do.

For the spirit of democracy is not essentially at war with the spirit of reality. If it be in conflict with the force of reality to call the weak strong and the ignorant wise, it is equally at variance with reality to call the strong weak and the wise ignorant, to classify a weaker group wholly under the assumption of weakness, and — after asking it to grow — to deal to the individuals through which its growth appears, the same ruthless repression imposed upon the most irresponsible of their race. This the South has not wholly done. The recognition — politically as well as industrially — of the exceptional negro has in a number of our States and in many of our communities been explicit. The familiar assumption of the older controversialist of the North that all negroes have been disfranchised is conspicuously unfounded. And yet that there is among us such a tendency is evident enough. It is not the prevailing tendency; it is checked and corrected by other forces; but it is sufficiently powerful and representative to arouse the concern and to challenge the opposition of those within the South who desire that the forces of reality shall have their genuine rather than their spurious expression.

For to deal alike with the capable and the incapable, to make no appreciable distinction between the unworthy and the worthy, is not merely to deliver the better life of the negro to a sense of injury and humiliation, but to take from a whole race one of the deeper incentives of advance. More serious still, it is to involve all our political formulas in the twist and tradition of unreality, is to weaken the simplicity and directness of their meaning in the average mind and the adminis-

trative habit of the stronger race, and — by the social reactions attending such a process — is to involve the whole body of our popular political instincts in perversity and confusion. I have so frequently indicated, in this volume and elsewhere, the reactive injury of arbitrary methods in their relation to the stronger group that I do not here dwell upon them further. To declare that the political capacity of the worthy negro is not equal to that of the illiterate white man is wholly to confuse the issue. The statement is in many cases true, though I have never been able to understand how it could injure the political capacity of the illiterate white man for us to demand that he shall “qualify.”¹ And

¹ “Illiteracy is not a crime, but literacy is a duty. It is a duty of the individual to himself, and not only to himself but to the State. It is for the welfare of all that every man should be able to read the legal papers which he signs and the laws which he is expected to obey. No man should vote who cannot read the ballot which he casts. The man who himself has fought in the armies of the State should be exempt (as having already served his apprenticeship of responsibility). He should be excepted either by specific declaration or by a general provision postponing the period at which the new Constitution shall become effective. . . . I am not in favor, even though the individual be not entitled to exemption on the ground of military service — I am not in favor of *surprising* any man into the forfeiture of his ballot. The State should be reasonable . . . but she should also be wise in relation to her own good. Alabama’s percentage of illiteracy puts her, in that category, almost at the foot of the list of States. Shall she remain so? I am not now impugning the voting capacity of the illiterate white man; he is usually a better voter than the illiterate negro; and he is sometimes a better voter than some of the white men who can read and write. But I am arguing for the welfare of the white man and I am speaking in his interest. . . . Does he not need the incentive of a slight educational test? Will he value the ballot as he should if we continue to make it as cheap in his hands as ignorance itself? Is it statesmanlike to declare, as the State platform has declared, that the Constitutional Convention — chosen by the people of Alabama for the consideration of this whole question — shall be

yet the essential issue is not at all an issue as between the relative political capacity of the illiterate white man and the literate negro, or between this class and that of these contrasted races. The ballot has never been anywhere withheld or bestowed upon the subtle grounds of *comparative* political capacity. We do not withhold it from a Russian who has never known it, to bestow it on a Frenchman who has exercised it for a decade. We do not decide, before awarding it, whether it is safer in the hands of a cultivated Austrian socialist who does understand it or in those of a conservative Austrian peasant who does not. Allegations against the political capacity of excluded classes have insistently opposed (with more or less truth) every extension of the suffrage under every modern government; and yet it has been usually found — except in cases in which the admission of the ignorant and inexperienced was so precipitate and so overwhelming as to submerge the state itself (as in the *régime* of our “Reconstruction”) that the classes recently admitted have exercised the suffrage with as much intelligence and responsibility as the classes which have grown old in privilege and stale with custom. Such is the experience of England, of France, of our own communities at the North. Many a negro with his hard-won training, or with his little farm, is a wiser and safer custodian of the ballot than the white loafers about our bar-rooms or the transient element in the foreign population of our industrial and mining centres.

denied the right even to consider so elementary and so conservative a proposal?” From “An Open Letter Against the Proposed Constitutional Convention,” by Mr. Edgar Gardner Murphy, of Montgomery, Ala., April 12, 1901.

And yet, as I have already ventured to suggest, this is not at all the essential issue. The real question is not as to whether the worthy negro has, as yet, any very marked political capacity, but as to whether the attitude of the State toward such capacity as he has, is to be that of development or repression? That, in a sentence, is our question. Is it to the interest of the State that there should be perpetuated within its limits a vast¹ politically excluded population, a population of permanent non-participants in the interests, inspirations, and responsibilities of suffrage? There is no question here as to the unrestricted admission of the great masses of our ignorant and semi-ignorant blacks. I know no advocate of such admission. But the question is as to whether the individuals of the race, upon conditions of restriction legally imposed and fairly administered, shall be admitted to adequate and increasing representation in the electorate. And as that question is more seriously and more generally considered, many of the leading publicists of the South, I am glad to say, are quietly resolved that the answer to it shall be affirmative.

They realize that because of historic traditions it is inevitable that the admitted negroes should at first vote against "the party of the soil"; that theoretically if not actually the negro group may sometimes hold

¹ Mr. Walter F. Willcox, expert statistician of the Census Bureau, one of the least hopeful of the critics of negro growth and progress, estimates that at the close of the present century there are not unlikely to be from 23,000,000 to 24,000,000 negroes in this country, — most of whom will be presumably within the Southern States. See Mr. Willcox's paper in "Studies of the American Race Problem," by Alfred H. Stone; Doubleday, Page & Co., New York, 1908, p. 503. Of course the white increase will be much greater, so that the proportionate number of negroes will probably be smaller than to-day.

“the balance of power,” but that the negro vote is more likely to divide and that the menace of its partisan solidity will more certainly disappear under a policy of fairness than under a policy of discrimination. They have observed, also, that the third party or the reckless faction which has made a discreditable alliance with the negro vote has usually met the inexorable penalty of the politically insincere — the penalty of popular rebuke and of temporary, or permanent, annihilation; that the possible peril of a smaller group to the efficiency of the State is not a ground for destroying the democratic basis of the State itself (for upon that pretext the Conservatives of the East might strike the ballot from the hands of every Socialist, or a decided majority might anywhere subvert the power of the minority); and that the only real remedy for the abuse of suffrage lies in the normal and automatic reactions of public opinion. Nor have they forgotten that if the fact that a newly admitted class may theoretically hold “the balance of power” is a valid argument against the admission of worthy negroes to the ballot, it is an argument which would have excluded every new class which has been advanced to the suffrage since the introduction of the franchise; and that none of the possible or occasional evils of a carefully qualified negro electorate are likely to be so insidious or so damaging as the deliberate perpetuation of a fixed discrimination against a particular class — a class permitted in war to bear the responsibilities of the national defence, forced in peace to bear the responsibilities of the law-observing, of the taxpayer, of the free worker on the common soil, and yet inexorably condemned to a permanent status of political

humiliation. No population under such conditions — as even the counsels of self-interest might suggest — will ever reach the normal measure of its industrial productivity. Such a policy is powerless to touch the deeper springs of initiative and ambition; and the lower the original endowment of initiative the greater the necessity for every legitimate political reënforcement of the incentives to alert and sustained production.

A policy of fixed political humiliation toward any class of our population comports even less with our instincts than with our interests and our laws. There is no place in our American system for a helot class.¹ Our country is a democracy; and, whether we will or no, we are the inheritors of a Constitution. This is the second irreducible factor of our problem. Not only is the negro a negro, and not only is that fact among the realities, but it is also among the realities that the recreation of our institutions and the transformation of the political and social assumptions of our age are not among our privileges. Nor are such enterprises among our conjectures or desires. We want no fixed and permanent populations of "the inferior." We may in every personal or social sense desire separation, — that is an issue of personal reserve. It trenches upon no legal or social right. It inflicts no degradation of personal, industrial, or political status. It is a dogma not of repression, but of self-protection and self-development. But to legislate the permanent and indiscriminate political proscription of a whole population

¹ See also the Memorial Address on J. L. M. Curry, by Edwin Anderson Alderman, now President of the University of Virginia; *Proceedings of the Sixth Conference for Education in the South*, p. 266.

is to attempt the refounding of a country which is not exclusively our own, and the revival and reconstitution of an epoch of class autocracy which Jefferson, Washington, and Marshall had themselves surpassed. Indeed, our own greater preference is our greater country. The men of the South — whatever may be their political expedients of the moment — have seriously no more interest in the reactionary philosophies of caste than in the political conceptions of Nicholas II. If the conscious and deliberate acceptance of such a status by the weaker group be the only condition of "peace," then we had better have something less than peace; for it would indicate an absence of manhood in the weaker population far more serious than an inadequate or belated political capacity, and an absence of moral sagacity in the stronger far more costly than any of the conceivable consequences of racial or political disturbance. To rear the population of a stronger race surrounded by an environment of the lowly and the menial is difficult enough, but to rear such a population — virile in spirit and sensitive to the finer instincts of self-dependence — thronged by the *deliberately* menial, by those who are not only inferior but who have made a compact to be so, by those whose lot is an accepted subordination and a consenting subserviency, — would be more difficult by far. The stronger group within the South, as I have already tried to illustrate, has suffered indescribably from being pressed upon, from every side, by a weaker racial life; yet this "fate of the strong" has been light compared to the fate involving that higher racial group which through long periods of time should be subjected to the personal, domestic, and industrial contact of a race

of men and women wearing the self-accepted and self-approving status of perpetual proscription. It would involve a peril to everything in our life that is self-resourceful, wholesomely self-respecting, and soundly strong. For the member of a weaker race to accept the plain personal fact, in this instance or that, that his race is inferior, that it has incapacities or weaknesses, is one thing; for a whole race deliberately to accept a fixed legal and collective inequality of status in a democracy is quite another thing; a thing as injurious to the stronger group as to the weaker; a thing, moreover, which there is a Constitution to prevent,¹ and (should the Constitution sleep) the quick instinct of the South itself to weigh and to reject.

Not that the spirit of democracy (as we may again remind ourselves) is at war with reality. Democracy, as our institutions have interpreted it, does not mean that all men are physically or naturally equal, nor that all men, necessarily, shall be entitled to the ballot. It is wholly consistent with the restriction of suffrage. It declares, however, that such restrictions shall bear no stigma of class and that any fraction of our citizenship, under the provisions of the local State, shall be excluded — if excluded at all — only on the common terms.

Thus, to the inequalities of capacity democracy may not be wholly blind. General groups of men — if not arbitrarily chosen — may be excluded in the common interest. Democracy is not bound in its distribution of political responsibilities to accept the incapable for

¹ The reference here is not to the punitive clauses of the "War Amendments," which in the writer's judgment will never — in the deeper sense — be very influential, but to the spirit and force of the Constitution as a whole.

the capable, to enthrone the weak above the strong, or to overburden the intelligent with the multitudes of the ignorant and untrained. But there is, at length, a point at which the ultimate test of democracy appears. It is the point at which it reveals, or fails to reveal, what in a broad and human sense I may call its educational attitude toward the factors which it excludes. Does it exclude from suffrage in order finally to proscribe or in order finally to include? Does it rear its restrictions loaded with such negations of industrial and educational opportunity as to be discouragements, — or conjoined with opportunities which apply them and commend them as incentives? Is its administration thus so ordered as ultimately to broaden and strengthen (rather than to narrow) the basis of representation? And as to the relative political capacities of its included groups, capacities which will naturally differ from individual to individual as well as from class to class, are these dealt with in such manner as to develop rather than to repress, — as gradually to incorporate them, train them, and utilize them as assets in the political contentment and security of the State — or, by taking “snap-judgment” on their inadequacies, are our dogmas of proscription so timed and fortified as to condemn them to inaction, to discourage their true and eventual growth, and to transform them into embittered and permanent forces of weakness, suspicion, and decay? The fundamental issue is, I repeat, not as to the present relative political capacity of the negro, but as to whether the attitude of the State toward such capacity as he has shall be that of development or of repression.

VI

Such a question will largely find its answer in the scope and efficiency of our policy of fundamental public education. In the imposition of its educational "tests," is the State also providing such efficient institutions of elementary instruction as may enable every factor in its population to meet, and to find wholesome advantage in, the test imposed? Upon no presumption of expediency or right can we first disfranchise the masses of a population on the ground of their ignorance or on the ground of their incapacity, and then deny to them schools in which ignorance may be modified and capacity partially developed.

In the imposition of its property tests (however elementary these may be) is the State — through the equities of its legislation, the justice of its courts, the stability and efficiency of its protections to property and life — inspiring all the individuals of its population, however lowly, to have confidence in a policy of accumulation and to commit themselves to the practices of a patient and hopeful industry?

These are but two phases of what I may call the constructive policy of society, upon its educative side. I have dwelt elsewhere so fully upon the various phases of negro education, and the sacrifices which the South has made toward negro education are now so generally understood, that I touch the subject here only in relation to some of its more general phases. The distinctive work of the schools is of significant value, — of value not only for the elementary knowledge and the mental quickening which they initiate, but as an influence in

the discipline of character. But their work is as yet so poor in quality, so intermittent and ineffectual, — and must inevitably so remain for so long a period, — that the general formative and educative force of our common contact and of our familiar transactions with the race must remain peculiarly important. This, after all, is the most significant aspect of the actual education which a stronger group gives to a weaker. It may not be amiss if, in a single sentence, the case be overstated in order to give it clearness: to teach any group of human beings to read, and then — in the daily press which encompasses it — to give it little to read concerning itself except the flaring records of its crimes or monotonous comment upon its faults; to awaken a mind (and the very contact of our time is awakening the negro mind whether we give it a school or not), and then to touch it only with contempt; sharply to demand the development of high character, and then to class it in with the lowest; to insist upon thrift, and then to tolerate such conditions of disadvantage or insecurity to the life and property of the weak as to take from thrift its deepest economic basis, — all this constitutes an “education” which cannot be expected to train any race, much less a weaker one, into the life of a highly useful or happy population. This, after all, is our question. It is not a mere question as to the “rights” of the negro, as to academic and outworn contentions of “the North,” or as to the controversial justification of this or that political party. It is a question of practical and fundamental policy. Is the negro race at the South, a large and persistent factor in our economic and political organization, to be, in every fundamental sense,

a retrogressive or a coöperative population? The negro masses need the schools, but they need even more profoundly that sort of education, that form of unconscious training, which is found in the quickening of the fundamental economic motives — in the renewal of hope, the arousal of elementary ambitions, the stimulation of those industrial tendencies (such as economy, tenacity, frugality) which spring from a larger sense of security, from a more general confidence in the average rewards of industry, and from the simpler satisfactions of educational and civic opportunity. So to touch them and so to use them in the larger policy of our affairs is to increase both their power to produce and their power to purchase, and is to add increasingly to the forces which must contribute to the common development of the South. It is true that the acquisition of these qualities is not easy to any negro population. Their weaknesses are notorious. Shall we, therefore, make the acquisition of such qualities more difficult? Shall we best advance the health and strength of the State by further contributing to the race's demoralization, or by fostering so far as we may the slow but cumulative growth of those popular capacities and habits within which every government must find the ultimate sources of the public wealth?

Deliberately to hold them within the fixed stages of crude servility and undeveloped capacity is, moreover, but to mould the iron forms of our own repression. From motives both humanitarian and economic (but more conspicuously economic) the training of the common man, the development of every human industrial unit of society, has become the most characteristic policy

of modern states. The returns of such a policy in higher skill, in productive energy, in larger wealth, in the freer and happier experience of whole populations, have promoted it from the position of an elective experiment to the status of a now established assumption of economic health and power. The real training of the masses of the people has sometimes seemed the despair of statecraft. And yet no responsible modern government thinks, or will ever think again, of doing anything else. The advantage to the individual both from his own training and from his incorporation in a progressive industrial organization has been so great that the resulting gain to humanity has advanced us from what has been called a deficit, to a surplus, civilization,¹ — a civilization in which the cumulative processes of society have apparently overtaken the absolute necessities of consumption. Within the exchanges and transactions of such a fellowship — of sections and nations so amazing in their popular efficiency — the South must play her part. Upon what industrial basis shall she conduct her competitions? How can she hold her own, or be anything but a halting participant within the general body of the national supremacy, if her fundamental policy in reference to a vast fraction of her labor (a fraction which will be great no matter how large our accessions from without) be not a policy of deliberate and sustained development?

Our progress — in the face of our difficulties — has been inspiring. Our gains will gather volume as we

¹ See the opening chapter of "The New Basis of Civilization," by Simon N. Patten, Professor of Sociology in the University of Pennsylvania, New York, 1907; The Macmillan Company.

proceed. The time, however, will be soon upon us when we shall not be able fairly to compute our relative advance in startling percentages which have reference merely to our own past, or merely to isolated phases of activity, but when we must ourselves see and measure with clear eyes the *total* present scene with us, as contrasted with the scene elsewhere; and when our actual economic organization, as expressed in the average satisfactions and comforts of the people, must be viewed in direct comparison with like conditions in other sections of our country. That the general wealth of the South will ever equal the wealth of any section possessing a homogeneous white population we cannot expect. The average negro is not, and apparently will never be, individually as productive as the average white man; — though we should bear in mind the fact that no policy of deliberate development, such as has been applied to other groups, has been applied as yet to any negro population. But the test of the mettle of our statesmanship will not lie in any challenge of the impossible, in any demand that the South be relatively as rich as other sections (that we should be so is not necessary either to our character or our happiness), but rather in the challenge of the reasonable, the wise, the forever possible: the doing of the right thing with a difficult case, the making of the most out of the human and economic possibilities of our situation, the development and the utilization rather than the repression and rejection of such stores of industrial capacity as our populations may possess. To assume that in this day of the training of *peoples*, of the development and equipment, not merely of a selected leadership, but of human aggre-

gates, we can even measurably succeed upon a labor basis of crude "untrained muscle," of mere stolid, stupid animal power, is to forget that elementary truth which throughout our discussion has seemed to appear and reappear in many forms, — the truth that whenever a social group persistently maintains, in relation to an included group, a policy of constriction and repression, there follows the constriction and repression of its own life. Not only is it embarrassed and constrained by the actual loss of the energies and capacities which it restricts, but the reactive force of its restrictive policies — absorbing its mind in the preoccupations of constraint — confines and hardens the largeness of its own temper, the varied fertility of its thinking, the scope and freedom of its development. To be long busied with the task of holding a laborer by the throat is an engrossing, confining, oppressive occupation — not to the laborer alone. That the illustration, if literally applied, would be unjust does not alter its relevancy as a suggestion.

VII

It may seem, in one sense, that I have dwelt but little upon the wisdom and necessity for every policy which might promote the development of the unprivileged masses of our white population; yet — in another sense — it may be said that I have written of but little else. I have given the subject little direct discussion, partly because I have dwelt upon it so explicitly elsewhere, partly because its significance commands an assent so cogent and so universal that its importance could happily be assumed.

There can be no general basis for any policy of progress, no ground for any larger program in reference to the weaker group, except in so far as the masses of the stronger race are themselves more adequately included in our whole philosophy of development. It is only through their larger fitness to comprehend and to believe, that any wholesome conception of a free and legitimate ascendancy can have consistent popular support.

And yet there is also an indirect consideration of the backward elements of our white population in every policy which in its homelier applications may give them better neighbors, may quicken the dull negro life about them from its apathy into something more of hope and vigor, which may turn the common mind and the general face of their localities and communities outward toward constructive interests, which may set every man to work — even the blackest and lowest — in the knowledge that he has his chance. The musty allegation of “the man on the street corner” that the success of the negro will mean “war,” and will make the poor white man “fight,” is like so many of the dogmas of cheap gossip that have befogged our situation. It is anything but true. The ferocity of the irresponsible is found at the South, just as it is found everywhere, but it expresses no representative attitude toward the successful or unsuccessful negro. The occasions of racial conflict, as with all the occasions of their mutual demoralization, are found at the lower rather than at the higher levels. The negro man or woman who can really do something, the negro farmer who shows the qualities of industry and stability, is not an occasion

of fisticuffs. Here and there the lawless may show envy and irritation; but the worthy negro is protected not merely by the common habits of social order and of neighborly good sense, but by those forces of public and economic self-interest which in every community come to the support of the life which is an asset, and which protect everywhere the citizen with something to sell and with money to buy. Where our negroes are failing, are hopeless and sullen and self-abandoned, we know that all things are insecure and that every man is relatively poorer. Where our negroes are succeeding, we know that each life is safer, that the general wealth in circulation is greater, that every man is a little stronger, freer, and richer.

Just why we should distrust as a policy for the State a policy which we thus know to be sound for the neighborhood, it would be difficult to explain. Yet it is in the clear light of our homely, daily, immediate experience as well as in the light of the ethical and economic suggestions upon which I have so long dwelt, that we shall find the principles of that constructive policy through which we may advance the national position and the new ascendancy of the South. As already suggested, this new ascendancy may seem to involve a double task — a task in relation to the included group and a task in relation to that larger national group within which the South is itself included. But we have found that these tasks are, in a measure, one; that it is largely in relation to the included group that the South, through all the forms of her public policy, is defining the nature of her relation both to the forces of her own

economic power and to the contingencies of national and international need. In her wise handling of the one problem lies her escape from local failure and her opportunity for general service. We shall win the distinctions of such a destiny — if we are permitted to win them at all — not, as we have seen, upon the basis of our conquest of the impossible, not by the hot-house advancement of a different social group into the possession of characteristics to which it may never have been destined and into a range of efficiency precisely parallel with that of stronger peoples, but just by dealing greatly with a great difficulty, — by the sobriety and flexibility of mind, the genius of resource, the sanity of temper, the moral tenacity and the intellectual courage with which we may contribute from the ground of our special experience to what, just now, is the imminent special problem of the world. Its solution will be long delayed. Its difficulties will yield to no immediate formula. But to us as we are busied with the creation of adequate institutions, and of a society rich in its satisfactions and generous in the freedom, solidity, and happiness of its culture, the supreme question (to adopt one of the commonplaces of illustration) is not the date of our arrival but the right direction of our progress, — is not the precise hour of the harvest but the soundness of our tillage and the wisdom of our sowing. Few of the great problems of human development, as we have before observed, have ever been finally “solved.” That our own problem should be thus “solved” is perhaps unnecessary. Yet to us it is supremely necessary that this problem should become in us no occasion of our industrial and political undoing. If it be not thus

an occasion of our failure, if it yield us, as we proceed, less and less of political cynicism and of spiritual despair, and something more of social confidence and intellectual power, then in the larger view of things our problem is solved already, — for we shall have found in such health that *sense* of health which is the joy of living: no unfinished civilization has anything better to desire, no “finished” civilization has anything better to remember.

And what is this sense of health, this consciousness of adequate and normal growth, but the responsive answer of every fraction and factor within a free and responsive commonwealth? A democratic state which while protecting its higher groups protects them not in order to destroy the weaker but in the interest of its total life, which imposes its reservations and restrictions not as denials of opportunity but as educative forces of its development, will have attained, at least in principle, the ultimate method of political and social progress. For as it pursues this principle in the varied forms and phases of its public policy it will discover within even the highest levels of its life the educative reaction of all its institutional provisions, — that justice in its courts will educate both the powerful and the lowly — the lowly in the sense of security and peace, the powerful in the sense of honor and the temper of equity; that a popular faith in the schools will advance the comprehension and sagacity of the strong as well as the training of the weak; that an efficient police, impartially enforcing an impartial law, will sensibly contribute to that established and instinctive prevalence of public order which is the best protection of the life and property of

every class; and that the fairness of our reward to labor is in large degree the measure of the cogency of our invitation to the productive capital of the world. As every informing custom or creative institution thus touches our lower or weaker groups, it reacts upon the strong as but another of the determining forces within the life and growth of a modern state,—a state embarrassed though not defeated by the abnormal perplexities presented through its divergent and contrasted populations, and finding in the educative equity of its adjustments and in the social discipline of its political situation no occasion of self-satisfaction or self-pity, but opportunities of peculiar achievement, of national and international service.

It may seem strange that our own distinctive task should be one of such peculiar difficulty. And yet, as one observes at Westminster that grateful legend upon the memorial of the elder Pitt, he is reminded that not infrequently the supreme difficulty in the life of peoples, as in the experience of individuals, is the occasion of the supreme distinction. Out of England's isolation — set as a little island in unfriendly seas — came that policy of naval strength which became the opportunity and the fact of empire. So, the Kingdom of the Netherlands rose out of its supreme difficulty, — its people finding, in their struggle against their floods, not merely a larger land beneath their feet, but new fidelities of patience, stronger powers of resolution, a deeper unity of mind, — a larger country within the heavens.

Those lands which are conscious of a great difficulty are not poor. The poor land is that which, having no great difficulty, busies itself with the fictions of its importance; — or the land having a great difficulty, but finding no way out of its imperturbable complacency. It was through the negro in our experience that the South once lost her mastery, her mastery not over him alone, but over those opportunities for a national leadership and for an uninterrupted eminence of service to which her capacities entitled her. It may be that through this same strange, waiting, baffling factor in her life, her ascendancy, in higher forms, may again return, — in forms not threatening the estate and dignity of labor, the sway of freedom, the instinct and custom of our age, but bestowed by a labor which she has freed, and by an age and a democracy which, in her service to their profoundest task, she has supremely justified.



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